

THE GOOSE
HANGS HIGH

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS
By LEWIS BEACH

COLLEGE OF MARIN LIBRARY
KENTFIELD, CALIFORNIA

EVA MERZBACH COLLECTION
COLLEGE OF MARIN LIBRARY
KENTFIELD, CALIFORNIA

Presented by

MR. LAWRENCE LIVINGSTON, JR.



PRINTED IN U.S.A.

THE GOOSE HANGS HIGH

THE GOOSE HANGS HIGH

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY
LEWIS BEACH



PS
3503
E1133
G6

BOSTON
LITTLE, BROWN, AND COMPANY
1924

Copyright, 1923, 1924,

BY LEWIS BEACH

All rights reserved

Published March, 1924.

All persons are hereby warned that "The Goose Hangs High" is fully protected by copyright, and any-one presenting the play in any form whatsoever without the written consent of the author or his recognized agents will be liable to the penalties by law provided.

Sec. 4966.—Any person publicly performing or representing any dramatic or musical composition, for which copyright has been obtained, without the consent of the proprietor of the said dramatic or musical composition, or his heirs or assigns, shall be liable for damages therefor, such damages in all cases to be assessed at such sum, not less than one hundred dollars for the first and fifty dollars for every subsequent performance, as to the Court shall appear to be just. If the unlawful performance and representation be wilful and for profit, such person or persons shall be guilty of a misdemeanor, and upon conviction be imprisoned for a period not exceeding one year.—U. S. Revised Statutes, Title 60, Chap. 3.

TO MY BROTHER,
ROBERT S. BEACH

THE GOOSE HANGS HIGH

"THE GOOSE HANGS HIGH" was presented in New York by The Dramatists' Theatre, Inc., at the Bijou Theatre on January 29, 1924. James Forbes staged the play. The setting was designed by Livingston Platt. The cast was as follows:

BERNARD INGALS	<i>Norman Trevor</i>
EUNICE INGALS.....	<i>Katherine Grey</i>
NOEL DERBY.....	<i>William Seymour</i>
LEO DAY.....	<i>Purnel Pratt</i>
RHODA.....	<i>Florence Pendleton</i>
JULIA MURDOCH.....	<i>Lorna Elliott</i>
MRS. BRADLEY.....	<i>Mrs. Thomas Whiffen</i>
HUGH INGALS.....	<i>John Marston</i>
RONALD MURDOCH.....	<i>Geoffrey Wardwell</i>
LOIS INGALS.....	<i>Miriam Doyle</i>
BRADLEY INGALS.....	<i>Eric Dressler</i>
DAGMAR CARROLL.....	<i>Shirley Warde</i>
ELLIOTT KIMBERLEY.....	<i>Harry Cowley</i>

THE GOOSE HANGS HIGH

ACT ONE

December twenty-third

The scene is a charming, restful, Colonial living room, obviously long lived in by people of breeding and taste.

In the back wall, at almost the extreme right, is an arch — with closed portières — leading to the hall. The entrance to the house from the street — across a veranda — is in the left wall of the hall. Right of the arch there is just room enough for a desk; to the left of the arch, low, stationary bookcases, filled to overflowing with volumes of all sizes and colors. Fairly large, framed photographs of Lois and Bradley as children hang over the bookcases; they are inoffensive. Left of the bookcase, a square piano. The left wall is divided into three equal parts by two windows. A mirror hangs between them. A long, narrow table, on which is a lamp, is placed near the windows. A chair below the table and one to the right of it. In the right wall, at the back, the entrance to the dining room; below the door, a fireplace in which a wood fire burns; and below the fireplace, against the wall, a chair. Near the fireplace, but facing the fourth wall, is a large sofa. Back of it, and to the right, a small

table, holding a lamp. Left of the sofa, a table and a chair. In front of the bookcases a large chair and floor lamp.

When the curtain rises it is five o'clock in the afternoon. The lamps are lighted. There is no one in the living room, but in the dining room Eunice is singing softly. Presently Bernard — accent on first syllable — enters the hall from the street.

BERNARD (*calling cheerfully*)

Hello! Upstairs or down?

EUNICE

Down, dear. Coming.

[*Bernard takes off his hat as he comes into the living room. Eunice enters from the dining room. They are glad to see each other, and their love is immediately apparent. They have charm and distinction, and they will always be respected. One feels — on seeing them — that he would like to know them personally. Eunice is tall and slender; a beautiful woman in her late forties. Bernard is fifty-one, thin, and fairly tall. He has never lost his youthful enthusiasm and his manner is often very boyish.*

BERNARD

How are you this afternoon?

[*Touches her affectionately on the shoulder.*

EUNICE

Fine! (*Kisses him*) Rhoda and I just finished the last of the Christmas cakes.

BERNARD

Ha! Lots of those stuffed with almonds and citron — the kind Bradley begs for?

EUNICE

And his father devours.

[She slips the cake which she has held hidden in her hand between his lips.]

BERNARD

Oh! Great!

EUNICE (*goes to the large table and picks up the evening frock which she is embroidering*)

Through for the day?

[Sits; embroiders.]

BERNARD (*between bites*)

I have to get the Mayor's signature. He's home — sick with a cold. Just ran in to see if you wanted anything downtown.

EUNICE

I don't think of a thing, dear. Unless you want to bring up the holly and the wreaths. Shall we hang them to-night?

BERNARD

Fine! Did you get a letter from any one of the children to-day?

EUNICE

No.

BERNARD

They ought to write you more often.

EUNICE

Bradley and Lois (*pronounced to rhyme with Joyce*) must be very busy this week.

BERNARD

And Hugh?

EUNICE (*caught; smiles*)

Oh, well. Bradley's trunk came this afternoon.

BERNARD

What?

EUNICE

By express — collect.

BERNARD

Why did n't he check it on his ticket?

EUNICE

We'll find out when he gets home.

BERNARD (*with a smile*)

Maybe we will — and maybe we won't.

EUNICE

I wish his present would come.

BERNARD

I'll stop at the postoffice. If it's not there I'll send a wire on to New York.

EUNICE

The expense —
[*Stops.*

BERNARD

What's the good of a Christmas present several days late? Eunice, what do you want for Christmas?

EUNICE

Nothing, dear.

BERNARD

I never know what to get you. I wish you'd make out a list as the children do.

EUNICE

There is n't a thing I need.

BERNARD

I do n't want to get you something you need but something you'd like to have.

EUNICE

Then just a little check — if you can spare it.

BERNARD

For you to spend on Lois.

EUNICE

Oh, shame!

BERNARD

You've worked that trick before. Better tell me what you'd like or I may buy you a monkey.

EUNICE

Let's be sensible, Bernard. They'll be home. That's all the present I want. And you know their wardrobes will need replenishing — the January term-bills —

BERNARD

You'll get the monkey.

EUNICE

If you dare —

BERNARD

It'll serve you right. Sure there isn't something I can do for you downtown?

EUNICE

I think everything's been attended to.

BERNARD

All right.

[Goes toward the hall.]

EUNICE

Bernard, I noticed Dedricks are having a sale of men's suits. Don't you think you might get one?

BERNARD

What's the matter with my suit?

EUNICE

Your "suit." That's about right.

BERNARD

Well, I can't wear more than one at a time.

EUNICE

Run in and see if there is n't something you like.

BERNARD

All right.

EUNICE

Promise?

BERNARD

Maybe.

EUNICE

If you don't — (*laughs*) — Bernard, if I had to buy you one.

BERNARD

Good Lord! That's the reason I've always rather liked you: you've never even bought me a shirt.

EUNICE

I'll select a loud, brown check, with a waist line at the arm-pits, — (*with a gesture*) — one button —

BERNARD

Stop it! Stop it!

EUNICE

Then buy a suit yourself.

BERNARD

Oh, come on, dear. This is all right to wear at the City Hall. Just wait a year or two and I'll Beau Brummel. (*Goes to her and kisses her*) I'll be back soon. And do I get some of those almond and citron cakes to-night?

EUNICE

I'll think it over. But not "some." Maybe two.

BERNARD (*turns toward hall again*)

That son of mine! (*Stops*) Eunice, they'll be here to-morrow at this time.

EUNICE

I'm watching the clock.

BERNARD

Oh, I 'm not so anxious.

EUNICE

You 'll be at the station an hour before train time.

BERNARD

What bees in your bonnet! (*Looks at her*) Why, dear, you 're crying!

[*Goes to her quickly; drops his hat on the table.*]

EUNICE (*pressing his hand*)

I 'm just a silly old thing.

BERNARD

Indeed you 're not! What is it?

EUNICE

It 's the first Christmas Hugh has n't been home.

BERNARD

I wish he had n't decided not to come.

EUNICE

I offered to pay his traveling expenses if he would.

BERNARD (*laughs slightly*)

So 'd I.

EUNICE

There must be some reason we —

[*Breaks off; rises.*]

BERNARD

I 'll hurry along.

EUNICE

Pay my respects to the Mayor.

BERNARD

Surely. (*Leaving*) Must n't forget to take the machine to the garage in the morning. (*Stops near hall entrance; laughs*) Would n't Bradley bawl me out if he could see the condition the spark-plugs are in!

[The doorbell rings, the street door is opened, and Noel Derby enters the house.]

NOEL (*calling*)

Hello? Any one home?

BERNARD

Who's here? (*Turns; looks into hall*) Why, hi, there, Noel!

[Goes into hall.]

NOEL

What are you doing home this time of day?

BERNARD

Ha! Caught, aren't you? (*Closes door*) Calling on my wife when you don't expect to find me here.

[Bernard puts his arm in Noel Derby's and brings him into the living room. The latter carries a potted plant tied up in paper. He is Bernard's age.]

EUNICE

Good afternoon, Noel.

NOEL

Hello, Eunice. (*It is apparent immediately that Noel is an intimate friend of the Ingals. Noel sets the plant on the large table.*) Had to make Bern jealous and bring you over one of my cinerarias.

BERNARD

What? They're in bloom?

EUNICE

Oh, thank you.

[Removes paper from the plant.]

BERNARD

I did n't think you could get them to blossom by Christmas.

NOEL

I took your advice and forced them with nitrate of soda.

BERNARD

There 's nothing like it, is there?

EUNICE

What lovely color! It was nice of you to remember me — (*smiles*) — even if it was to make Bernard jealous.

[*Bernard puts the wrapping paper in the waste-paper basket.*]

NOEL

I'll have to admit they're nothing like the ones he used to raise in his knock-down greenhouse.

BERNARD

Go long!

EUNICE (*sits*)

Sit down, Noel.

[*Noel sits. Bernard inspects the plant.*]

NOEL

Bern, you remember Chaysle's — the market-gardener's — place?

BERNARD

Surely.

NOEL

It can be bought dirt cheap. He wants to go west.

BERNARD (*interested*)

Is that so?

NOEL

I'm tempted to take an option on it.

BERNARD

Great! It's a fine spot for a nursery. He's a pretty good start at a real greenhouse too, has n't he?

NOEL

Two thirty-by-seventeen houses. What do you say? Come in with me and we'll buy it.

BERNARD

Not yet, old man.

NOEL

That's what you've been saying for the last eighteen years. And this is as far as we've got. Eunice, can't you do anything with him? (*Turning toward Bernard*) Are you going to wait till we're too old to hold a spade?

BERNARD (*laughs*)

We'd not make much of a success of it then, would we?

NOEL

Well, why can't we buy Chaysle's place now and get started?

BERNARD

Can't do it, Noel.

NOEL

Why not?

BERNARD

I've other fish to fry.

NOEL

What do you mean?

BERNARD (*good-naturedly*)

Oh, you benighted old bachelor! Do you realize I've a son and daughter in college? But why don't you go ahead?

NOEL

You must be in it too. I like raising things but I have n't your "growing hand." You're like my grandmother — why, she could push a stick in the ground and it 'd sprout.

BERNARD

I'll give you all the help I can. Gee, it'll be great to go out Saturday afternoons and Sundays and putter about!

NOEL

I need you there all the time — to look after the planting. Oh, come on, Bern! Don't put it off again.

BERNARD (*shakes his head*)

It's an adventure — and I can't do any adventuring just now.

NOEL

You're afraid we won't make a go of it?

BERNARD

Oh, no!

NOEL

Well, then?

BERNARD (*after a moment; quietly*)

Money does n't grow on trees, Noel. Oh, you get started and some day —

NOEL

You promise?

BERNARD

I want to.

NOEL (*rises*)

Then I'll wait a little longer.

BERNARD (*jestingly*)

You're a coward.

NOEL

I?

[*The doorbell rings.*]

EUNICE (*starts to rise*)

Let me go.

BERNARD

I will.

NOEL

I must run along.

BERNARD (*going into hall*)

Oh, stay and chat with Eunice.

EUNICE

Do.

BERNARD (*opens door*)

Oh, how do you do?

EUNICE

Have you much in bloom, Noel?

NOEL (*sits*)

No. I have n't had to run a race with Bern this year. There's been nothing to spur me on.

DAY (*at the door*)

I'm glad I caught you. Missed you at the City Hall.

BERNARD

Come in.

DAY

Did n't you leave early?

BERNARD

No. Come this way.

[*Bernard enters with Leo Day. The latter is a handsome man in his early thirties, but he is quite without poise or breeding. He wears a fine raccoon coat, cutaway, spats, a derby tilted a trifle too much*]

on one side, and he carries a stick. He has an unlighted cigar in his mouth. He does not take off his hat until he sees Eunice.

BERNARD

Eunice, may I present Mr. Day? Mrs. Ingals.

EUNICE (*graciously*)

How do you do, Mr. Day?

[*Holds out her hand.*]

DAY (*too pleased; hurries to her*)

Well, this is a great pleasure! (*Starts to take her hand*) Oh, pardon my glove. (*Pulls off his glove, then shakes her hand*) I was hoping I might meet you when I came.

BERNARD

And do you know Mr. Derby?

DAY (*turns; sees Noel; nods curtly*)

How are you?

[*Turns immediately to Eunice again.*]

NOEL

Good afternoon.

DAY (*to Eunice*)

I've always wanted to be introduced to you.

EUNICE (*surprised*)

Thank you.

DAY

Yes, sir! Roger Bradley's daughter!

EUNICE

Won't you sit down?

DAY

Thanks. I guess I'll take off my coat. (*Puts cigar, stick, and hat on table*) It's fine out of doors but it makes you perspire like a trooper in the house. (*Bernard helps Day with his coat; then takes off*

his own.) It's a great pleasure to be in this house. I guess pretty near every one who was important in the old days used to come here. Must be pretty close to seventy-five years old, is n't it?

EUNICE

My grandfather built it in '42. He copied his mother's house in Massachusetts.

DAY

Well, what do you know about that! (*Moves about; looks into room at left*) Ha! The dining room! Swell!

NOEL (*rises*)

Good-by, Eunice.

EUNICE

Oh, don't go, Noel.

NOEL

I've some other plants to deliver.

EUNICE

We're expecting you for dinner on Christmas.

NOEL

Oh, thanks, Eunice.

BERNARD

We'll see you again before then?

NOEL

Surely. So long. Good afternoon, Mr. Day.

EUNICE

Good-by.

DAY

'Afternoon.

[*Bernard goes into the hall with Noel. They chat a moment, then Noel leaves the house.*]

BERNARD

Brought your hyacinths into the heat yet?

NOEL

Do you think it time?

BERNARD

Yes. But don't give them too much water at first.

NOEL

About every three days?

BERNARD

Once a week 's enough.

DAY

Does he come here every Christmas?

EUNICE

Generally.

DAY

Pretty nice for him.

EUNICE

We 're all very fond of him.

DAY

It 's an honor to be invited to a meal in that dining room.

EUNICE (*laughs*)

Oh, I —

DAY (*cutting in*)

Yes, it is. The people who have eaten there. Don't you suppose I know? The Bradleys were one of the starters of the Four Hundred.

EUNICE

Oh, you don't think —

[*Bernard returns to the living room.*]

DAY (*cutting in again*)

Of course, there's a Four Hundred here! A hundred thousand people — but there is in any city just as much as in New York. I know all about it.

EUNICE (*rises*)

Now I know you came in to see Mr. Ingals.

DAY (*breaking in*)

Oh, don't go.

EUNICE

You'll excuse me, I'm sure. Good afternoon.

DAY (*puts out his hand*)

Good afternoon. Can I come again?

EUNICE

Yes, indeed.

[*Gives Day her hand; then turns and goes into the hall and upstairs.*

Day sits; sighs with pleasure as he leans back in the chair.

BERNARD (*wondering why Day has come*)

That report was all right?

DAY

Oh, yes — yes. (*Slight pause. Bernard waits for Day to speak. The latter reaches for his cigar; puts it in his mouth. Bernard strikes a light and holds it to Day's cigar. Day laughs, delighted.*)

Leo Day waited on by the husband of a Bradley.

Oh — have a cigar?

BERNARD

No, thanks.

DAY

I wish a photographer was taking a picture of me now. I'd like one to send up the hill — to Mother Superior in the Orphan Asylum. As a kid I used to tell her where I intended to get to. She never believed me. (*Slight pause; then he becomes very business-like*) Ingals, I want to talk to you. I suppose you've heard — maybe you wondered yourself

why I wanted to be elected a councilman. People knew it was n't because I wanted the salary — why any one of my gasoline stations brings me in more than that — and I've got thirty throughout the State.

BERNARD

Really?

DAY

Yes. And I'll have half a dozen more by spring. Did *you* know I was raised in the Orphans' Home?

BERNARD

I believe your party did mention it during the campaign.

DAY

The first thing I set out to do when I left the Home was to get money. God knows I worked — since I was thirteen. Well I've got the money now — I'm thirty-three. But I have n't been getting the next thing I was after. I want to get in with the right people — socially. I want them for my friends — I want a wife. That's why I ran for councilman. I was elected, but it has n't done a damn bit of good. Is anything wrong with me?

BERNARD

Why, no!

DAY

Then what's the trouble?

BERNARD

I don't think there is any.

DAY

Then why are n't people taking me up? They certainly know about me. I've been in office a month but —

BERNARD

I don't believe local politics are much of a stepping stone to social advancement. But, Day, there's nothing in that.

DAY

I want it. I'm going to fight for it. And I want your help.

BERNARD

Oh, but I — I'm not in the social crowd.

DAY

You could be if you wanted to — and your children are. Well, what about it? Will you help me?

BERNARD

If I can do anything.

DAY

You can and you're going to.

BERNARD

What do you mean?

DAY

I've been snubbed — I'm not going to be again. I can do a lot for you at the City Hall, Ingals, if you return the compliment. If you don't —
[*Shrugs his shoulders.*]

BERNARD (*surprised*)

What?

DAY

I'm up for membership at the Country Club. You can help me.

BERNARD

I'm not a member.

DAY

But friends of yours are.

BERNARD

What do you mean, Day?

DAY

There 's no use beating about the bush: I've got to have your help and I'm going to have it.

BERNARD (*angered*)

You mean part of my job as City Assessor is to help you socially?

DAY

Yes.

BERNARD

Good God! We've had unpleasantness at the City Hall — things have been particularly trying with some of the new councilmen, but — Day, I can't.

DAY

Why not? You mean they won't take me up?

BERNARD

No. But think, man, it 's not square.

DAY

You want to keep your position?

BERNARD

Yes, of course. Why, I —
[*Stops.*

DAY

Councilmen always have friends they want jobs for. And the friends can be damn insistent. But I'm for you if —

BERNARD (*breaking in*)

You mean the council wants to get rid of me?

DAY

I don't say there 's a plan actually on foot, but it 's well for you to have me pulling for you. And I can make it worth your while, financially, if —

BERNARD

No!

DAY

A check — or slip you some cash —

BERNARD

No!

DAY

Well, that's up to you. (*Laughs; rises*) I sha'n't insist on that. But I want you to speak to your friends at the Country Club — they vote next week. And what's the matter with inviting me here to dinner some night soon?

BERNARD

Day!

DAY

Why not? Would you be ashamed?

BERNARD

Oh, don't you understand? It is n't that. It's like taking a bribe.

DAY

Bah! To invite me to dinner, to tell your friends it'd be a good thing to have me in the Club? Why it won't hurt your conscience a damn bit. (*Pause*) Well? It's just a part of your job, Ingals. And you want to keep your job.

BERNARD (*does not look at Day*)

I'll do what I can.

DAY

Great! (*Slaps Bernard on the back; goes and picks up his coat*). That's the stuff! (*Puts on his coat*) Any night you say I'll be able to come. (*Pulls a couple of cigars from his pocket*) Here.

BERNARD (*looks at him*)

No, thanks.

[*Turns away.*]

DAY (*puts on his hat; picks up his stick*)

You had your coat on. I've my Mercer. Can I drop you any place?

BERNARD

No. I've some things to bring home.

DAY (*going toward hall*)

See you in the morning. (*Stops; turns*) Oh, remember me to your daughter when she gets home. (*Bernard goes into the hall with him.*) So long.

BERNARD

Good-by.

[*Day goes out. Bernard closes the door and returns to living room. He stands still for a moment, thinking. He is angry, but he is caught: he can't do anything else. Goes to the table and picks up his hat. Eunice enters; carries some heavy green paper and cord.*]

EUNICE

Oh, I thought you 'd gone on with Mr. Day.

BERNARD

I wanted to take my machine so I could bring up the wreaths.

EUNICE (*goes to table and starts to wrap the paper round the flower pot*)

Don't bother if —

[*Stands with her back to Bernard.*]

BERNARD (*breaking in*)

Oh, no. (*Pause*) Eunice, do you suppose — could we invite Day to dinner some night next week?

EUNICE (*is surprised; but she turns to him immediately, smiling*)

Of course, dear, if you 'd like to.

BERNARD

I —

EUNICE

How about Tuesday? I'll write him a note.

[*Bernard goes to her, kisses her, and goes into the hall.*]

BERNARD

I 'll be back soon.

EUNICE

All right, dear.

[*Bernard leaves the house. Eunice thinks for a moment, but she does not understand. And if Bernard has asked her to invite Day to dinner that is enough. She turns to the plant again. Rhoda, the middle-aged servant, enters.*]

RHODA

I 'm sure the ham 's boiled enough, Mrs. Ingals. Now shall I bake it while it 's still hot?

EUNICE

Oh, no! We're going to have it for dinner to-morrow. The cold roast to-night.

RHODA

All right.

EUNICE

It 's nice to have you back, Rhoda.

RHODA

I 'm glad to be here. I wish you 'd let me stay all the time.

EUNICE

I hope to have you back for keeps some day. Rhoda, if you don't mind, I'd rather you did n't tell the children you have n't been here the last couple of months.

RHODA

All right.

[The doorbell rings.]

EUNICE

I'll answer. (*Eunice goes into hall, opens door to Julia Murdoch and Mrs. Bradley. Rhoda goes into the dining room*) Oh, Julia, I'm glad to see you.

JULIA

Hello, Eunice.

GRANNY

I met Julia at the corner and persuaded her to come in for a minute.

[They come into the living room. Julia is a rather large, dark-complexioned woman of middle age. She is dressed as though she's just left a Fifth Avenue shop. Granny is in her early seventies; she's rather small, physically, but is an aristocrat through and through.]

EUNICE

I'm glad. It's an age since I've seen you, Julia. How are you?

JULIA

I'm a tired woman. But I've bought my last Christmas present so I'm a happy one.

EUNICE (*laughs*)

Sit down.

[Helps Granny with her wraps.]

JULIA

I want to use your 'phone first. (*Picks up telephone which is on desk*) If I sit down I won't want to get up.

EUNICE

Tired, Mother?

GRANNY

No.

JULIA

Hello. Ridge 6532. . . . Yes. (*Turning to Eunice*) I thought I was through shopping yesterday. Then Sara Tuttle told me last night she'd seen Mary Wright buying a bag for me. Hello, I'd like to speak to Ronald Murdoch, please. (*Granny sits downstage left.*) I intended to cut Mary off my list this year. What does she want to give me a bag for? I've a dresser drawer full. Hello. Ronald? I'm at your Aunt Eu's. Please stop for me on your way home. There's a dear boy. (*Hangs up receiver*) Had a brilliant idea this year, Eu. (*Sits at left of sofa*) Had n't bought a single present till Monday. Then like a flash it came to me to buy every one — my husband and the cook included — a Wallace Nutting.

GRANNY

What's a Wallace Nutting?
[*Eunice sits at the large table.*]

JULIA

Don't you know those nice, framed, hand-colored photographs of fireplaces and bedrooms with braided rugs and girls sitting there looking moony?

EUNICE

You remember, Mother.

JULIA

There's a lovely one of a pineapple bedstead that would look fine over your mantel.

EUNICE

Bradley threatened to spank me if all the pictures were n't in the attic when he got home.

GRANNY

I'd be ashamed to repeat it.

JULIA

There're only four. I'd like to have Ronald tell me how to decorate my living room. What do men know about such things? Well, I don't care where you hang it — put it in the attic if you want to — but you're getting a Wallace Nutting from me for Christmas. It's all done up with the card and ribbon.

EUNICE

Oh, thank you. I know I'll enjoy it.

JULIA

No, you won't. No more than I'll welcome the bag Mary's bought me. But that's Christmas. What's Bernard giving you?

EUNICE

I asked him not to give me anything.

JULIA

Then you're a fool.

[Opens her coat.

EUNICE (laughs)

Why?

JULIA

He's my own cousin. But all husbands are alike and wives should get everything from them they can. I'll tell you what I did. I've been wanting a Kelvi-

nator for the house, and I was afraid Cal might give it to me for Christmas. So I met him downtown for lunch one day last week, took him into Ribaud's, selected and saw that he paid a deposit on a dinner ring. Now he won't have to do any worrying and my mind's easy. What's that green thing you're embroidering? I've been wondering ever since I came in.

EUNICE (*holding up the dress*)

A frock for Lois.

JULIA (*goes to Eunice*)

Is n't it smart!

GRANNY (*voicing her disapproval*)

Lois had it made in Springfield. Sent it home for Eunice to embroider.

JULIA

Eunice Bradley, I'm ashamed of you.

EUNICE

Why?

JULIA

The idea of your wasting your eyesight that way.

EUNICE

Oh, no! It's her Christmas present. The only new party frock she's had this year. The others have been made over things.

JULIA

If Lois wanted it embroidered why didn't she do it herself?

EUNICE

But she's busy. I wanted to do it.

GRANNY

She'd find time if she knew you would n't.

JULIA

How long have you had that dress you're wearing?

[*Sits at table.*]

EUNICE

I don't remember.

JULIA

Not that it does n't look so well it makes me jealous. But it's the principle I'm thinking of: everything for the children. But you never were normal about Lois and Bradley.

EUNICE (*smiles*)

Maybe that's because they were twins.

GRANNY

Fiddlesticks! You've been just as bad about Hugh.

JULIA

How is he?

EUNICE

Fine.

JULIA

Coming home for Christmas?

EUNICE

Not this year.

JULIA

Well, if you wanted him to live here you should n't have sent him to college. That's why I did n't urge Ronald to go.

EUNICE

You did n't encourage very much either, Julia.

JULIA

At the time Cal and I did n't feel we could afford to send him. I don't think so much of this college business anyhow. It just gets it into their heads they're ladies and gentlemen.

EUNICE

Is that a bad thing?

JULIA

Oh, you know what I mean. They seem to think their parents are made of money and all they have to do is have a good time. And where are they when they graduate? They don't learn anything about making money but every way to spend it. And as for religion, college makes them all atheists.

[Eunice laughs whole-heartedly.]

GRANNY

Julia, you 've more sense than I thought you had.

JULIA

How do you feel about Hugh and Dagmar?

EUNICE

What do you mean?

JULIA

Are n't they engaged?

EUNICE

No!

JULIA

I 've heard they are.

GRANNY

What?

EUNICE

Why, Julia!

JULIA

You know that Dagmar got home from New York last night?

EUNICE

No.

JULIA

She was n't coming home either but her father sent for her: Mrs. Carroll is giving a big dinner-dance.

EUNICE

But what did you mean about the engagement?

JULIA

I heard it in Doyle's Bookstore this afternoon when I was buying the Wallace Nutting. Supposed, of course, you knew. Mrs. Carroll told some one or other to-day.

GRANNY

And he's never said a word to us.

EUNICE

Hugh would have written me if —

JULIA (*cutting in*)

You can't tell anything about what young people are going to do nowadays. When do the twins get home?

EUNICE

To-morrow at five.

JULIA

Does Lois still intend to go into advertising?

EUNICE

Yes.

JULIA

And Bradley is going to paint scenery for a living?
[*Eunice nods her head.*]

GRANNY

Is n't it dreadful, Julia?

JULIA

Oh, I think it'd be rather fun to have a son connected with the theatre — their morals go to pot anyway nowadays. But I can't see the sense in

your spending money sending him to college. How 's a college education going to help him paint scenery?

EUNICE

It will make him a finer man, I hope. That 's all.

[Bernard enters the hall.]

BERNARD (*calling*)

Eunice, it 's come!

[Closes street door.]

EUNICE (*whispering*)

Don't say anything about the engagement, Mother.

[Bernard enters. He carries a package, wreaths, and strands of pine.]

BERNARD

Oh, hello, Julia. Afternoon, Mother Bradley.

JULIA

For heaven sakes! You look like a peddler.

BERNARD (*laughs*)

Don't I? Where 'll we put them, Eunice?

EUNICE

Why — on the piano.

GRANNY

Bernard, don't you know it 's possible to have things delivered?

BERNARD

Not when you buy them at a Cash and Carry.
(Throws off his coat and hat)

GRANNY

I can't see why neither you nor Eunice has any pride.

BERNARD (*pointing a finger at Granny*)

In Eunice's case maybe it 's retribution. Well, Eunice I found it at the postoffice.

EUNICE

Bradley's gift?

BERNARD (*he's like a child with a new toy*)

Yes.

[Starts to unwrap the package.

JULIA

What are you giving him?

BERNARD

It's a very rare, old, French text on the history of costuming.

GRANNY

May I see it?

BERNARD

Certainly.

[Hands her the book.

GRANNY

It does n't look like much.

BERNARD

But he told us the one place we could buy it so it must be what he wants.

GRANNY (*opens book and sees price mark on front page*)

Thirty dollars? For that?

[Hands the book to Eunice.

EUNICE

He needs it in his work.

[Turns the pages of the book.

JULIA

Bernard, how many times a day do you make yourself think you're a millionaire?

BERNARD

Never wanted to be one, Julia.

EUNICE

Oh, these engravings are delightful. Just see, Bernard.

BERNARD

Is n't that slick?

EUNICE

I don't blame Bradley for wanting it.

GRANNY

"Wanting" and "getting" mean the same thing in this house. Oh, their goose hangs high!

BERNARD (*to change the conversation; pulling some letters from his pocket*)

Oh, here's a Christmas card that came to the office to-day — (*looking through the letters — there's a telegram among them*) — from the Prescotts — they're in San Diego.

EUNICE (*alarmed*)

Bernard, what's that telegram?

BERNARD (*sorry she's seen it*)

Oh, nothing important, dear. Here's the card.

[*Hands her an envelope.*]

EUNICE (*rising*)

It's from one of the children.

BERNARD

The Prescotts have bought a house out there, Julia.

EUNICE

Bernard, please tell me. Is one of them ill?

BERNARD

No! It really is n't anything, Eunice.

EUNICE

Bernard, I must know. (*Bernard gives her the telegram. Eunice opens it quickly and reads aloud.*)

"Terribly sorry but I can't leave till you wire fifty dollars with loads of love Lois."

BERNARD

You see.

GRANNY (*disgusted*)

Oh!

EUNICE

Oh, she won't get home to-morrow.

BERNARD

Yes, she will! The wire came three days ago.

EUNICE

Poor Lois, she always runs short at the last moment.

BERNARD (*laughs*)

Can't you see her, forgetting all about having to buy a railroad ticket? Next time I think I'll buy the ticket myself.

EUNICE

Do you suppose Bradley has enough money?

BERNARD (*laughs*)

Oh, we 'd have heard from him if he had n't.

[*Eunice puts the book in one of the desk drawers.*]

GRANNY

Oh, you two make me tired! Julia, can't you bring them to their senses?

BERNARD

Well, Eunice, listen to that!

GRANNY

You let the children think you're made of money. They get anything they want.

BERNARD (*smiles; shakes his head; emphatically*)

Oh, no they don't!

GRANNY

There's Eunice in a dress that's been made over and made over. You've even given up your greenhouse because it costs a few dollars to heat. And Eunice has gone without a maid all fall so you could send more money to them. And do you think they appreciate it?

EUNICE

Oh, Mother, they do!

GRANNY

If Lois did n't realize she had to save enough money to get home with, she should have been made to stay in school for the holidays. Oh, you can't blame them for trampling on you when you lie right down at their feet.

EUNICE

Mother, this is n't very pleasant for Julia.

JULIA

Oh, it's none of my business, I know. But I think your mother's right. We've taught Ronald to do things for himself. He knows the value of a nickel. How can any one appreciate filet mignon if he does n't know what round steak's like?

[Hugh appears at entrance to hall. The others do not see nor hear him. Hugh is tall and slender; he's well-mannered and groomed and is twenty-nine years old. He stops and bows.]

HUGH

Good afternoon, Mr. and Mrs. Ingals.

[All turn toward him.]

EUNICE (*rushes to him*)

Hugh!

BERNARD

By George! (*Hurries to Hugh. Hugh laughs delighted at the joke he has played. Takes his mother in his arms*) Where in blazes did you come from? Hurry up! Hurry up!

[*Hugh lets go of Eunice. Bernard's arm is outstretched.*]

HUGH

Dad, you old brick! Are you ashamed because Aunt Julia's here? I'm not. (*Puts his arm around his father and kisses him on the cheek; then releases him quickly with a laugh and goes to Julia*) How are you, Aunt Julia? I'm glad to see you. [*Gives her his hand.*]

JULIA

Fine, thank you.

HUGH

And Granny — (*lifts her up and kisses her*) — Why, you look like a flapper!

GRANNY (*horrified*) Oh!

EUNICE

But Hugh, you were n't coming.

HUGH (*laughs*)

I changed my mind.

BERNARD

Why did n't you wire?

HUGH (*taking off his coat*)

There was n't time — I changed it so quickly. The ladies should understand the way I changed it.

BERNARD (*goes to Hugh and takes his coat and hat*)

But I would have met you. And here your mother wept this afternoon because you were n't coming.

HUGH

Oh, she did n't!

JULIA

I bet I know why you changed your mind: Dagmar was called home.

HUGH

The picture of my fond parents and the twins weeping over my empty chair at the Christmas feast got too much for me. And if Granny ate my share she'd have indigestion.

GRANNY (*shaking her head*)

He's begun already.

HUGH (*drops into the big chair beside the large table*)

Come here, Mother.

EUNICE

What is it, Hugh? [*Goes to him.*]

HUGH

Well, would n't you like to sit beside your son? [*He pulls her down to the arm of his chair. Eunice leans against him.*]

BERNARD

Well! Well! Julia, is n't it great? (*The tears are coming to his eyes. He turns quickly, carries Hugh's coat and hat into the hall.*) Brrr! Left the hall door open too!

[*Closes street door.*]

EUNICE

Oh, Hugh, your Christmas presents have gone to New York?

HUGH

What? Nothing for me on Christmas?

EUNICE

They were sent the first of the week.

HUGH (*laughs*)

Well, I see where somebody goes shopping to-morrow.

GRANNY

Don't you dare, Eunice!

HUGH

Want to make a bet with me, Granny, that she does?

BERNARD (*reëntering*)

Hugh, where are your bags? Did you leave them at the station?

HUGH

They're at Dagmar's. Took a taxi there and walked the rest of the way.

BERNARD (*as though offended*)

Well, is n't that a nice note: going to the Carrolls' first.

HUGH

It's a rotten shame: her father scared Dagmar stiff. She thought her mother was really ill. But a big dinner-dance is her ailment. Dagmar could n't even get an upper so she sat up all night in a chair-car.

BERNARD

You use n't to be so almighty concerned about Dagmar's sleep.

EUNICE (*rising quickly; to change the conversation*)

Bernard, please tell Rhoda that Hugh is here.

BERNARD

You bet!

[*Bernard goes into the dining room. The door bell rings and the street door is opened.*]

JULIA (*rises*)

That must be Ronald.

EUNICE

Oh, don't go, Julia.

[*Ronald enters. He's a couple of years younger than Hugh. He lacks the latter's poise and assurance and he does not seem particularly happy.*]

HUGH (*rising*)

Hello, there Ron.

RONALD (*face lights up*)

Why, Hugh! I thought you were n't coming home.

HUGH (*shaking Ronald's hand*)

So 'd I.

[*Bernard returns.*]

BERNARD

Glad to see you, Ron.

EUNICE

Good afternoon, Ronald.

GRANNY

How do you do?

RONALD

Hello.

HUGH

How's everything with you, Ron?

RONALD

All right. You look fit.

HUGH

Tiptop.

RONALD

Let me congratulate you.

[*Julia sits on the sofa.*]

HUGH

Thanks. But what for?

RONALD

Why, your engagement, of course!

HUGH

Engagement? What do you mean?

[Eunice turns away; sits at left of the sofa.]

BERNARD

What's all this?

RONALD

Well, are n't you engaged to Dagmar Carroll?

HUGH

What ever gave you that idea?

RONALD

That's what I was told this afternoon.

HUGH

I've been missing out on things. I'll have to do some investigating.

EUNICE

Won't you sit down, Ronald?

[Ronald sits at the large table; Bernard, on the sofa.]

HUGH

Still at the First National, Ron?

RONALD

Yes.

HUGH

Like it?

RONALD

Well enough.

HUGH

But you ought to see something different. Are n't you fed up with this —?

EUNICE (*breaking in*)

Hugh!

HUGH

I 'm sorry.

RONALD

Yes, I 'm crazy to get away.

JULIA

Why, Ronald!

HUGH

Course it 's an all right place for the middle-aged.
But there 's no future. You ought to make a break.

RONALD

I 've never known anything else.

HUGH

Come on to New York.

RONALD

What 'd I do?

HUGH

That is n't what 's important. Anything that lets you live. Why, I 'm tickled pink to get back and see Mother and Dad and you people. But the place frightens me as soon as I get off the train. It seems to be holding out its hand to seize me, to hold me fast. I 'd rechristen it Complacency.

JULIA

You ought to be ashamed.

HUGH

Rather than be back here, I 'd live in a hall bedroom in New York, eat all my meals at a lunch wagon —

GRANNY (*breaking in*)

You 've never had to do that, have you?

HUGH (*laughs*)

No, Granny, I 'll have to admit you 've got me there.

RONALD

Do you think you could get me something to do in New York?

HUGH

I'll try to find something for you.

JULIA (*rises; going toward Hugh*)

Hugh, you've no right to talk this way.

HUGH

But what's the use of anything if you can't talk frankly?

RONALD (*rising*)

Hugh's right. I hate it here!

[*There is a racket on the veranda: a man singing "Hail, Hail, the gang's all here," the tramp of feet, a girl's voice too.*]

GRANNY

What's that?

HUGH (*hurrying to hall entrance*)

They're here.

[*Before any one can move, the street door is opened and Lois and Bradley tear into the living room. Lois comes first; she has a hat box, an ukulele, and three flower boxes. Bradley holds three suitcases on his extended arms, a bag hangs from his elbow, and golf clubs are strapped across his back. Immediately they take possession of the house and seem to charge the atmosphere with electricity. They are in their early twenties. At times they seem younger — thoughtless, vapid creatures. Then they surprise by abruptly revealing keen, informed minds. They're a fine-looking, healthy pair who live every moment of the day. There's great commotion throughout the following scene, which is played with*]

great speed. Every one seems to be talking at once.)

Enter, the twins.

LOIS (*throwing everything in a heap and rushing to Eunice*)

Mother!

EUNICE

My dear!

JULIA

I thought they were to come —

BRADLEY (*entering; sees Hugh first*)

Why, Hugh, you poor boob! Here! [*Slides the suitcases off his arms into Hugh's.*]

BERNARD

Oh, by George!

GRANNY

How did they get here to-day?

LOIS

Dad!

[*Hurries to him, puts her arms round him, and kisses him. Hugh drops the suitcases at hall entrance.*]

BRADLEY

Hello, Aunt Julia. (*Smacks her on the cheek*)

Hi', Ron. (*Slaps him on the shoulder and goes to Eunice*) How are you, Mother? [*Kisses her.*]

LOIS

Hugh, you big bear! Want to kiss me?

HUGH

Not particularly.

LOIS

But I do. [*Kisses him.*]

BERNARD

Oh, is n't this great?

[*Bernard and Eunice are laughing, they're delighted but much moved.*]

BRADLEY

How are you, Dad?

[*Holds out his hand.*]

BERNARD

Fine, Brad, fine!

[*Punches him playfully.*]

LOIS (*rushing to her*)

Granny, your color 's wonderful. (*Kisses her*) Not makeup?

GRANNY

Lois Ingals!

BRADLEY

Sis, how can you? (*Goes to Granny; kisses her*)

Why, Granny's the most genuine person I know.

BERNARD

Eunice, is n't it wonderful?

LOIS

Greetings, Aunt Julia. (*Kisses her; goes immediately to Ronald*) Ron, you want to kiss me. Quick!

Oh, it's just like a petting party!

BERNARD

But where have you come from? How did you get here?

BRADLEY

Where's Dazzler?

EUNICE

Upstairs.

BRADLEY (*throws off coat and hat, hurries upstairs, calling*) Dazzler! Dazzler!

LOIS (*bending over the hat box*)

Mother, I can't wait to show you. (*Opens box*)

It's the best looking — (*Takes a hat from the box; goes to Eunice*) Look, is n't it a love?

EUNICE

Oh, sweet! (*Lois hurries to Julia with the hat. Julia and Granny inspect it.*) But it's you, Lois, I want to see.

LOIS (*pulling another hat from the box*)

And you have n't seen this one either. (*Holds it up*) I made it myself. Did n't I do well? (*Goes to Julia*) Went into a shop. Sent the clerk to the back of the store. Sketched the hat. And there it is!

[*Bradley comes downstairs and into the living room, carrying Dazzler in his arms. He drops the delighted dog on the floor. Lois and Hugh rush to Dazzler, play with him. The three children make more fuss over the dog than they have over their family. The din is terrible.*

GRANNY (*screaming*)

Oh! Take that dog out of here!

[*The children tear across the room with the dog, go into the hall. Hugh and Lois go outdoors, Bradley is following, but Bernard stops him.*

BERNARD

Here, Brad! Stop! How did you get here this time of day?

BRADLEY

Ha! That's the question! (*Puts a cigarette in his mouth*) Some one give me a light.

BERNARD

Never mind the light! How did you get here?

BRADLEY (*taking Bernard by the arm and hurrying him to one of the windows*)

Come here, Dad. Look, Mother, you too. What do you see?

(Eunice goes to the other window. Ronald follows her. Julia and Granny rise; look toward windows.)

BERNARD

Nothing.

BRADLEY

What? Are you blind? Mother, is your eyesight failing too? Can't you see?

EUNICE

Nothing but an old Ford.

BRADLEY

Ha! First prize to Eunice Ingals.

EUNICE

What?

BERNARD

You came in that?

BRADLEY

You're picking up, Dad.

RONALD

Really?

JULIA

You drove —?

EUNICE

In a machine —?

BERNARD

Oh, you're joking!

JULIA

I never heard of —

RONALD

Oh, great!

EUNICE

Why, did you —?

BERNARD

Great guns!

BRADLEY

Silence, Ladies and Gentlemen, and I'll tell you.
Six of us bought it for a hundred and fifty.

BERNARD

You started out with—?

BRADLEY

Sure! Jack and Barron escaped with eight-fifty apiece — they were dumped at Albany. Ted, fifteen; he lives in Syracuse; Jerry and Alan crawled out at Toledo — they antied twenty-five dollars each. Frank vamoused at Detroit — his share was thirty-one; and I picked Sis up at Fordville and made her pay five dollars of my thirty-seven.

[Bernard, Eunice, and Ronald are delighted; Julia and Granny, disgusted.]

JULIA

I never heard of such a ridiculous thing in all my life.

BRADLEY

That 's why we did it, Aunt Julia! Has n't some one got a light?

[Bernard strikes a match and lights Bradley's cigarette.]

GRANNY

To start out at this time of year —

BRADLEY

Oh, Granny, we read every almanac we could get hands on and not one forecasted snow. Of course, the darn tires held up till we got to Detroit. *(Lois and Hugh reënter.)* We've been on the rims

for the last four hours. What do you think I can sell it for, Hugh?

HUGH

Junk!

LOIS

Oh, Mother, where 's my dress? (*Eunice holds it up. Lois hurries to it.*) Oh, delirium! Oh, you were a lamb! Is the gray one back from the dyer's?

EUNICE

Yes.

LOIS

Where is it?

EUNICE

In your closet.

LOIS (*hurries to the stairs*)

Oh, I must see.

BRADLEY

The tin box only runs on one cylinder. But some one ought to fall for it.

HUGH

Park it downtown and have an auction sale.

BRADLEY

Say, you're there! To-morrow — day before Christmas — lots of rubes in town. Ron, how are you? You look down in the mouth.

RONALD

I was just thinking what fun it must be, getting home like this.

EUNICE

Bradley, why didn't you let us know you were driving? I'd have been so worried.

BRADLEY

That's why I didn't tell you. You never get a

headache over what you don't know. Oh, did a box come for me?

EUNICE

Yes. It's in the hall.

BRADLEY

Have you a chisel and a hammer, Dad?

[Goes to hall. Bernard starts toward dining room.]

EUNICE

Bernard, please tell Rhoda they're all here — to have the dinner we planned for to-morrow tonight.

BERNARD

I should say so!

[Goes into dining room.]

RONALD

Mother, is n't this wonderful?

JULIA

It's just like a vaudeville.

[Bradley brings in a wooden crate.]

BRADLEY

Here we are!

GRANNY

Your trunk came by express.

BRADLEY

Believe me, there was no room in the Rolls Royce for it.

[Bernard returns with hammer and chisel.]

GRANNY

It came collect.

BRADLEY *(dropping the crate on the floor)*

Of course, it did!

HUGH

What've you there?

BRADLEY

Come on! Let's open it.

[Bernard, Ronald, and Hugh give their attention to the crate. Bradley stands watching them, making no attempt to help.]

GRANNY

Not in here!

[Lois reënters.]

LOIS

Mother, it's beautiful. I'll wear it to-morrow night and the green one, Monday. The old taffeta will do for the dinner on Tuesday if I get some new tulle.

[Sits at piano; plays jazz.]

JULIA

Eunice, they'll ruin the carpet!

HUGH

They nailed this up for doomsday.

RONALD

Give me the chisel.

BERNARD

Watch out, Hugh! That's my finger.

BRADLEY

Put some pep into it.

GRANNY

Excelsior all over the floor!

JULIA

The vacuum-cleaner never picks it up.

HUGH

Pull it, Ron.

RONALD

Right.

BERNARD

There!

BRADLEY

Now let *me* take them out. (*Pulls two framed pictures from crate; hands one to Bernard*) Hold it, Dad!

[*Takes paper from other picture; throws paper in the crate.*]

GRANNY

Bradley, do you realize you're not in the cellar?

LOIS (*rising*)

Piano needs tuning, Mother.

[*Bradley gives Ronald second picture; then takes his photograph from wall. The wall paper is faded.*]

EUNICE

Oh, Bradley!

[*But she really does n't mind.*]

BRADLEY

I told you I'd do it, Mother. Give me a hand, Hugh.

[*Hands Hugh the photograph. Stands on a chair and takes Lois' photograph from the wall.*]

GRANNY (*rises; goes to center of room*)

He's standing on that hundred-year-old chair!

JULIA

The upholstery'll be ruined.

BRADLEY

Here, Sis, maybe you want to take it back to college with you. (*Gives Bernard Lois' photograph*) Give me the picture. (*Bernard starts to give Bradley the new picture he holds. Lois takes her ukulele from the case; tunes it.*) No! No! The other one.

[*Ronald gives Bradley the picture. Bradley puts it on the wall.*]

BRADLEY

Now did I remember the size right.

LOIS

Mother, I'm wild to show you the Christmas present
I brought you.

BERNARD (*laughing*)

He even had the wire put on them!

BRADLEY

Great! Does n't show the paper's faded.

[*Jumps down; takes picture from Bernard.*]

GRANNY

Eunice, are you going to allow him —?

BERNARD

Granny, it does look well.

GRANNY

That ugly old woman?

HUGH

She's a Holbein, Granny.

GRANNY

I don't care who she is. She's a sight.

[*Returns to her chair.*]

BRADLEY (*to Hugh*)

How do you know it's a Holbein?

HUGH

Happen to have heard of Hans some place.

LOIS

Whom are you making love to now, Ron?

RONALD

No one.

LOIS

Oh, that's downright wicked of you.

GRANNY

Lois Ingals!

BRADLEY (*goes to Eunice and puts his arm round her waist*)

Now is n't that a good wall? I'll hang Lois and me in your bedroom where you'll see us the first thing in the morning.

HUGH

Don't you let him! Those pictures would keep you awake all night.

JULIA

Your mother should have her house as she wants it.

BRADLEY

Oh, not if it's bad, Aunt Julia, not if it's bad!

What do you think? I'm going to Maine this summer. Roland Styles — he knows more about scenery than any one else in this country — is going to conduct a school there. I've been invited to live with the Babcocks so the only expense will be my tuition.

HUGH

How'd you know Styles'll admit you?

BRADLEY

Admit me? He's crazy to have me.

LOIS

How do you know?

BRADLEY

He's seen some of my sketches — the ones I designed for *Tristan*.

HUGH

You had the nerve to design sets for *Tristan* after the wonderful ones Urban did?

BRADLEY

Urban? Pooh! Who's he?

HUGH

He's at the Metropolitan Opera House.

BRADLEY

What's that? Ancient history!

LOIS

Did n't you know, Hugh? Brad belongs to the school of "scene-wrights" that want eventually to do away with actors entirely.

BRADLEY

That's Gordon Craig. I don't go as far as he does. But symbolism's everything.

HUGH

Symbolism and the scene-painter.

LOIS

His gang's only interest is in giving more prominence to the scene-dauber.

BRADLEY

How can the theater advance when we have to deal with people like you?

JULIA

What are they talking about?

LOIS

The only thing that'll be on the stage in Brad's *Othello* will be a green-eyed monster.

BRADLEY

Jealousy brooding over —

HUGH (*breaking in*)

For *Romeo and Juliet* a gold cupid — no balcony, no tomb — only a fat cupid.

BRADLEY (*heatedly*)

You're such blatant realists that if the scene of a play is a tenement you want the odor of garlic to come over the footlights.

GRANNY

Bernard, how can you let them go on this way?

BERNARD

I like it. Go to it, Brad!

[*Telephone rings. Lois hurries to answer it.*]

BRADLEY

What's the use? They're so hopelessly dumb.

LOIS

Hello.

BRADLEY

Say, Hugh —

LOIS

Oh, Dick, you dear!

BRADLEY

I've some books on scenery in my trunk I'd like you to read —

LOIS

What? I can't hear.

BRADLEY (*hurrying to his suitcase*)

Wait! There's one in my suitcase —

HUGH

Not to-day, old dear.

LOIS

Please be quiet! (*Bradley rummages in the suitcase.*)

Perfectly splendid. I'm mad to see you. . . .

What? . . . At Freda's? . . . Sure! . . . Ten minutes. . . . Right. (*Hangs up receiver*) Brad, they're dancing at the Chapmans'. (*Grabs her suitcase*) Are you on to go?

BRADLEY (*drops the book he's taken from the suitcase on the piano*)

Now?

LOIS

Yes. (*Hurrying to the hall*) Excuse me, Aunt Julia and Ron. See you later.

BRADLEY (*picks up a bag*)

Maybe I'd better go. I have n't invited a girl to a single dance. Now's my chance to find who's looking for a man.

[*Hurries upstairs.*]

GRANNY

They're mad, stark, raving mad, both of them.

BERNARD (*laughing*)

They're wonderful!

JULIA

Gracious! (*Rises*) It's after six. Come, Ron.

GRANNY (*rises*)

Julia, will you do me a great favor? Will you invite me to dinner and take me out of this?

JULIA

Delighted!

BERNARD

Oh, Granny!

EUNICE

Not tonight! Their first night!

GRANNY

Oh, I'll see enough of them before they get away.

RONALD

Good-by, Aunt Eu. It's been great.

[*He helps Granny with her coat.*]

EUNICE

Come over often, won't you?

RONALD

I'd like to.

GRANNY

Will you come after me, Bernard?

BERNARD

Surely.

JULIA

Oh, Ron will bring her home. Good-by, Bernard.

Heavens, but you've your hands full!

BERNARD (*delighted*)

And just think, Julia, they're here a whole day before we expected them.

[*Bernard and Eunice go to the hall with Julia and Ronald.*]

HUGH

Good-by. Glad to have seen you.

JULIA

Good-by.

RONALD

So long.

HUGH (*stops Granny as she is going into the hall; takes her arms*)

See you again some time, Granny?

GRANNY

In my coffin before the Holidays are over, I'm afraid.

[*Hugh laughs. Granny pulls her arms away and follows the others. Farewells are said in the hall. Hugh lights his pipe. Julia, Granny, and Ronald leave the house. Bernard and Eunice return to the living room.*]

HUGH

Granny *is* getting old. What sense of humor she ever had seems to have gone.

EUNICE

Don't tease too much.

HUGH

Oh, don't you think she really likes it?

BERNARD

It's fine to have you home, Hugh.

HUGH

Thanks, Dad. Sit down, won't you? (*Eunice sits. Then Bernard and Hugh*) You know, Dagmar and I are engaged. (*Slight pause*) Hang it all, we were n't going to tell any one just now. But Mrs. Carroll had suspicions; she got all worked up last night and Dagmar had to tell her. She swore her to secrecy but Mrs. Carroll blabbed it the first thing.

BERNARD

But why did you want to keep it secret?

HUGH

Oh, I don't know; we just did. Course we intended to tell you and the Carrolls but the others were n't to know till we were married.

EUNICE

It's to be soon then?

HUGH

Next month, we hope.

EUNICE

Hugh!

HUGH

It's the hardest thing to find the kind of apartment we want. We've been looking for a month.

BERNARD

Hugh — how about finances?

HUGH

I've enough saved to buy the furniture for a little apartment. Dagmar's going on with her work.

BERNARD

What?

HUGH

She would n't give it up for any one. As long as she feels that way I don't want her to. Neither of us has to pay much of an income tax; but we love each other so why should n't we get married?

EUNICE

I never dreamed you were in love, Hugh.

HUGH

You've known Dagmar. Did n't you see I was bound to fall in love with her? She's the finest girl in the world — she's wonderful!

BERNARD (*jesting*)

In a month — better get my evening clothes out of mothballs, Eunice.

HUGH

The wedding is n't going to be here.

BERNARD

Then we'll have to go to New York.

HUGH

Oh, of course, it'd be great to have you there. But I think you'd have more fun if you'd wait and come on a little later. You see, we're just going to drop in on a minister some Saturday afternoon and then run over to Atlantic City for the weekend.
[*Pause.*]

EUNICE

It's such a surprise — I can't understand why you've never said anything to me.

HUGH

You never asked. (*Laughs*) You must have realized I'd get married some day.

EUNICE

Of course, but — (*breaks off; rises; goes to him*)
I hope you'll be very happy, Hugh.
[*Kisses him.*]

HUGH

Thanks, Mother.

BERNARD (*goes to Hugh*)

I guess Hugh knows what we hope.
[*Gives him his hand. Pause.*]

HUGH

But I don't see why there has to be such gloom about it.

EUNICE (*quickly; almost beseechingly*)

Oh, there is n't, Hugh, there is n't! We're happy for you.

LOIS (*on the stairs; calling*)

Hurry, Bud!

HUGH (*rises*)

Don't tell them now.

BERNARD

Why?

HUGH

They'll kid.

[*Lois enters. She has changed to an afternoon frock; holds a parcel in one hand behind her.*]

LOIS

How 's that for speed? Mother, I can't wait: I must show you your Christmas present now.

[Gives Eunice the package.]

EUNICE

Thank you, dear. But sha'n't I wait —?

LOIS

Oh, please! See it now.

[Eunice unwraps the gift. It's a large ostrich feather fan.]

EUNICE

Oh, how beautiful!

LOIS

Is n't it a patootie?

BERNARD

Fine!

HUGH

Dad, did you ever hear about the woman who gave her husband lace curtains for Christmas?

LOIS

Hugh, you beast!

EUNICE (*kisses Lois*)

It's lovely, dear. But you should n't have been so extravagant.

LOIS (*going toward Bernard*)

I was n't really. Got it at a bargain. We did want Mother to have something nice for Christmas, didn't we, Dad?

BERNARD

I should say so.

LOIS

It was dear of you to wire me the money so quickly. You are a lamb. (*Runs her hand up the back of*

Bernard's head) Need a hair cut though. (*Bernard laughs. Lois goes to Hugh.*) When in the world are you going to get married, Handsome?

HUGH

What's the rush?

[*Eunice puts the fan in one of the desk drawers.*]

LOIS

Simply to keep you a normal, human being. You'll have all sorts of complexes if you don't hurry up.

HUGH

Aha! So you've become a Freudian!

LOIS

You don't have to be a Freudian to know a man should be married before he's your age.

[*Goes toward the hall.*]

HUGH

For Pete's sake, Sis, don't get hipped on the sex question.

LOIS (*calling*)

Hurry, Bud, your make-up's all right.

BRADLEY (*upstairs*)

Coming.

LOIS

Why don't you come along, Hugh? It'll be a good chance for you to see every one.

HUGH

I'll have dinner with Mother and Dad to-night.

LOIS

But they won't mind. Oh, you don't, do you?

BERNARD

Of course not! Go and have a good time.

LOIS

We 'll be home early.

[Picks up one of her hats.]

HUGH

I 'll have to call at the Chapman's some time. It 's all right?

EUNICE

Surely.

HUGH

I 'll brush up.

[Goes upstairs.]

LOIS

He is a handsome brute, is n't he?

[Eunice starts to make an attempt to straighten up the room. Lois stands at the mirror, putting on her hat.]

BERNARD

Oh, wait, Eunice, till they 've gone and I 'll do it. Come Lois, sit down and tell us all about it?

LOIS

What, Dad?

BERNARD

Everything — what you 've been doing. Your letters are like telegrams — as though you counted the words.

LOIS *(laughs)*

Sometimes I almost do. *(Sits)* Oh, courses are n't much of a grind this semester — except the one in criminology — but I 'm working like a fiend on the paper.

EUNICE

Do you write all those advertisements?
[Sits.]

LOIS

Most of them. That's a pipe. It's getting the shops to advertise that's tough. Dad, I cajole, I flirt — anything to get an ad. I even threatened boycott with one merchant till he came across. How are things at the City Hall? You've a new council, haven't you?

BERNARD

Yes. And they're raising Cain.

LOIS

How so?

BERNARD

Upsetting everything. They act as though this was the first council the city ever had.

LOIS

Who are they?

BERNARD

Frank Monroe, John Teed, Elliott Kimberley —

LOIS (*breaking in; interested*)

Not that terrible Kimberley who used to run a livery?

BERNARD

The same.

LOIS

But he's a crook! Good Lord, a hundred thousand people here and a man like Kimberley can get elected. Aren't people like you ever going to wake up?

BERNARD (*smiling*)

What do you mean?

LOIS

It makes me so damn mad!

EUNICE

Lois!

LOIS (*rises*)

Mother, you ought to swear about it too! Decent people absolutely dodge their responsibility. (*Bradley enters.*) Look what you did about prohibition — let a lot of half-baked W. J. Bryan's and W. C. T. U.'s turn us into law-breakers. The same busy-bodies that —

BRADLEY (*cutting in*)

Who wound her up?

LOIS

It makes me furious! But if you go on sleeping the first thing you know there'll be a revolution. Then you'll wake up.

BRADLEY (*bending over a suitcase; cutting in*)

Oh, get off the soapbox, Sis!

LOIS

Yes, that's the whole thing — *laissez faire*.

EUNICE

Oh, Lois, come here.

LOIS

What is it? (*Goes to Eunice*) Too much powder?

EUNICE

Just let me put my arms around you. I want to be sure —

LOIS

What is the matter, old sweetheart?

BRADLEY

Speaking of the affairs of government —

[*Holds up a bottle of gin which he has taken from the suitcase.*]

There, Dad, with my compliments.

BERNARD

By George, where 'd you get it?

BRADLEY

From one of the rising millionaires.

EUNICE

Bradley, you might have been arrested.

BRADLEY

I 'd like to see any one go through my bag without a search warrant.

EUNICE

But in Cambridge —

BRADLEY

When he delivered it the bootlegger had a policeman on the front seat of his car.

BERNARD

You 're sure it 's O.K.?

BRADLEY

One of the fellows analyzed it. If Prohibition continues, chemistry will be a required course in every high school.

[Hugh enters. Lois puts on her coat. Eunice helps her.]

HUGH

All ready. Ho! Fire-water!

BRADLEY (*picking up his coat and hat*)

I 'll show you how to make the peppiest cocktail, Dad.

HUGH

I bet I can beat you.

[Goes to hall; gets coat and hat.]

BRADLEY

Let me have the key to the car, will you, Dad?

BERNARD (*gives him key*)

If you 'd come home when you said you were coming
it would have been washed.

BRADLEY

I 'd hoped you might surprise us with a new one.
If you don't get rid of the old bus soon you'll
never be able to.

LOIS

Come along. Oh, Mother, do you mind putting my
flowers in water? Ready, Hugh?
[Hugh and Lois go into the hall.]

BRADLEY (*following them*)

We 'll be back soon. Hugh, have you tried logan-
berry and gin?

HUGH

Grenadine and lemon juice are better.
*[They leave the house, laughing. The street door
bangs. Pause. Eunice sits. Bernard goes to one
of the windows and looks out. Rhoda comes from
the dining room.]*

RHODA

Dinner is served.

EUNICE

All right, Rhoda. But there 'll only be two after
all.

RHODA

Have they gone again?

BERNARD

Yes.

RHODA

They did n't even say hello to me.

EUNICE

They didn't think, Rhoda. They didn't mean anything by it.

[Rhoda goes out. Bernard goes to Eunice.]

BERNARD

You're not upset because they went off the first minute?

EUNICE

I'm glad they could go and have a good time.

BERNARD

So 'm I, so 'm I.

[Moves away.]

EUNICE

They're all right. They're *all right*.

BERNARD

They're great.

EUNICE (*rises; goes to Bernard*)

Come, dear, dinner'll get cold.

[Bernard puts his arm in Eunice's. They go toward the dining room.]

BERNARD

George, I wish I'd had the car washed to-day. It looks pretty punk.

CURTAIN

ACT TWO

December Twenty-ninth

There are flowering plants in the room, the Christmas garlands have been hung, and a wood fire is burning.

A moment after the curtain rises, Dagmar and Hugh enter the house from the street.

DAGMAR

We must n't stay more than a moment, dear.

HUGH

I just want to get my pipe. (*They come into the living room. Dagmar is a tall, slight, dark-haired girl of Hugh's age. She has a great deal of distinction.*) They're still at dinner.

DAGMAR

I'd like to explain to your mother.

HUGH

I know she did n't mind, Dagmar. And Day's there. Let's not go in.

[*Hugh takes her in his arms. Dagmar holds him to her for a moment; then she breaks away.*]

DAGMAR

Dinner's waiting. We must hurry, dear.

HUGH

Where did I put that pipe? (*Goes to the large table, sees a magazine, picks it up*) Oh, I wanted to show you this. (*Opens the magazine, takes it to her*) See — the table?

DAGMAR

It is just like the one we bought. [*Sits. Hugh sits*

on the arm of her chair. They're looking at the photograph in the magazine.

HUGH

Architecturally, the room's like that one in the apartment on Twelfth Street. We could arrange the furniture in the same way.

DAGMAR

Oh, Hugh!

HUGH

Don't you like it?

DAGMAR

It's just like every other room.

HUGH

"Every other room?"

DAGMAR (*laughs*)

I'd feel as though I were living on a page of "Good Interiors."

HUGH

Dagmar!

DAGMAR

The table in back of the sofa, two candlesticks on the mantel, a mirror above the console table—I suppose we could never have more than a single rose in the vase too. (*Hugh rises; he's offended. Dagmar does not realize; she's reading.*) I knew it! (*Reads aloud*) "The painting which hangs over the fireplace provided the color scheme for the room."

HUGH

Not such a bad idea.

DAGMAR

Brad and I were saying the other day we'd rather people went back to the atrocious period than have them do their rooms as some guidebook directs.

HUGH

I guess a man has to be an artist before he knows anything about furnishing a house.

DAGMAR (*looking up*)

What 'd you say, dear?

HUGH

Nothing. (*Goes to table near the fireplace*)
Wonder where I left my pipe. [*Sees it; puts it in his pocket.*]

DAGMAR (*rises*)

Hugh, you're offended. (*Takes a step toward him*)
I'm sorry.

HUGH

Why not consult Brad? He'll know just how our apartment should be done.

DAGMAR

That's not very kind of you.

HUGH

Well, you laughed at my slightest suggestion.

DAGMAR

I don't want to live in a room that can't be told from my neighbor's.

HUGH

The important thing is to have a room comfortable.
And that *is* a good room or it'd not be reproduced.

DAGMAR

I made a sketch this afternoon of the way I thought the room might be furnished. Of course, I see now it would n't interest you.

HUGH

That picture was n't the only idea I had. I made a drawing to-day too.

[Pause. Each is trying to be hard. Then they speak suddenly, together.]

DAGMAR

Please show it to me.

HUGH

Oh, Dagmar, let me see yours.

[They hurry to each other, Hugh pulling his drawing from his coat pocket, Dagmar, hers from a pocket in her skirt. They exchange sketches. Dagmar sits to inspect Hugh's, he stands.]

HUGH (*delighted*)

You've put the smoking-stand by the Windsor chair.

DAGMAR (*pleased*)

You did n't back the sofa with a table.

HUGH

You can reach the magazines when you're stretched out on the sofa!

DAGMAR

There's a box for flowers at the windows! But where's that floor lamp of yours?

HUGH

You have n't left a space for that writing-table you like. You must have it, Dagmar.

DAGMAR

No.

HUGH

I insist.

DAGMAR

My old desk will do.

HUGH

But I want you to have a new one.

DAGMAR

We'll save the money for something else.

HUGH

But you wanted it.

DAGMAR

We can't have everything. And, Hugh, we must have a portable table we can pull up to the fire for Sunday-night supper. We've always planned that.

HUGH (*hurries to her, drops on his knees, puts his arms round her*)

Just you and I — no guests ever for Sunday supper? (*Dagmar shakes her head. They kiss.*) I'm sorry I was a brute.

DAGMAR

I was n't laughing at you.

HUGH

It's because you're so wonderful that I'm always afraid I'm not half good enough.

DAGMAR (*touching his hair*)

Oh, my dear!

HUGH

Brad does know more about such things than I.

DAGMAR

I don't care how the apartment's furnished if you're there with me.

HUGH

My sweet! Oh, Dagmar, in a month — together in a month.

DAGMAR

It's the loveliest dream one could dream coming true.

HUGH

It is coming true. And nothing can spoil it.

DAGMAR

Nothing!

[Bradley comes from the dining room. He wears a dinner coat.]

BRADLEY

Well! Excuse me! I just want to get a cigarette.
[With one arm around Dagmar, Hugh sticks his hand in his coat pocket and holds out a package of cigarettes. But Dagmar rises.]

DAGMAR

Hello, Brad.

BRADLEY

Oh, don't mind me. I'm used to suffering.

HUGH *(rises; whispering)*

Let's get away before Day comes in.

BRADLEY *(is pocketing the package of cigarettes)*

He's not here.

HUGH *(holding out his hand for the package)*

Come along!

[Bradley takes another cigarette; then gives Hugh the package.]

DAGMAR

Oh, Brad, we were so lucky. I heard this afternoon of a woman out Washington Road who'd a lot of old furniture she did n't appreciate.

BRADLEY

Sure they're not fakes?

HUGH

Of course not! Dagmar knows.

DAGMAR

We got two chairs, a tip-table, and a pair of andirons.

BRADLEY

Ha! No wonder Hugh's tight with his cigarettes.

DAGMAR

She's more stuff in the barn but it was too dark to see.

HUGH

We're going out again the first thing in the morning. I'll want the car.

BRADLEY

Better take me with you.

HUGH

And have you tell the woman she's not charging us enough? No, thanks!

BRADLEY (*to Dagmar*).

Don't you ever get fed up hearing only his voice?
[*Dagmar smiles and shakes her head. Hugh puts his arm round her.*]

HUGH (*to Bradley; smiles*)

Satisfied?

DAGMAR

I would invite you to come and have dinner with us but I know you've had it.

BRADLEY

I wonder if I could eat two dinners.

HUGH

Hurry, dear! We just came in to get my pipe.

BRADLEY

I'm beginning to suspect that Hugh has an inferiority complex.

DAGMAR

What do you mean?

BRADLEY

He's afraid to let even his family have a moment with you, Dagmar. Mother was saying at dinner that she has n't had a word with you alone.

HUGH

Come on, dear!

DAGMAR (*to Bradley*)

Oh, do tell your mother how sorry I am I kept Hugh this afternoon.

HUGH

Oh, she did n't mind.

DAGMAR

But I want to explain.

HUGH

You can later.

DAGMAR

See who's going to be boss? Good-by, Brad.

BRADLEY

A year after you're married you'll both be darn glad to have me at the dinner table.

[*Hugh and Dagmar go to the hall.*]

HUGH

Don't you really think it's better to wait and have the furniture done over in New York?

DAGMAR

But it's so much more expensive, Hugh.

[*They leave the house. Hugh bangs the door.*]

BRADLEY

And the next thing will be baby-cribs and roller skates.

[*Eunice enters; goes to one of the windows and looks out anxiously.*]

EUNICE

You're sure Lois did n't tell you where she was going?

[*Granny enters.*]

BRADLEY

She did n't, Mother. Probably something exciting turned up.

[Bernard enters. He is tired and worried. Bradley sits on the sofa. Glances at the newspaper.]

EUNICE

I asked her and Hugh to be prompt.

GRANNY

You ought to know by this time that the only way to get them to do a thing is not to ask them to do it.

[Eunice sneezes twice.]

BERNARD (*anxiously*)

Why, Eunice, how did you ever catch such a cold?

EUNICE

I 'll be all right.

[Bernard goes into the hall.]

GRANNY

Why don't you tell him how you caught it?

BRADLEY (*does not look up from the newspaper*)

Hugh and Dagmar were just in.

EUNICE

Here?

BRADLEY

Came after his pipe. They 'd been out in the country buying furniture. Hugh said you 'd understand.

[Bernard reënters with a Paisley shawl which he puts around Eunice's shoulders.]

EUNICE

Thank you, dear.

[Turns to the window again.]

[Lois comes downstairs and enters the living room. She is wearing an evening frock made simply and of not too expensive material.]

LOIS

Hello, every one. (*Drops her evening wrap and carriage boots on the sofa*) Mother, I'm wearing your amethyst ring. Do you mind?

BRADLEY (*looking her over*)

Pretty good, Sis.

EUNICE

Why, Lois, have you been here all the time?

LOIS (*sits; picks up ukelele and strums on it*) I came in late — while you were at dinner. Did n't want to disturb the party so I went right upstairs. Where's Mr. Day?

GRANNY

Your mother asked you to be here for dinner.

LOIS

I could n't make it.

EUNICE

Where 've you been, Lois?

LOIS

I went into Wingate's — needed some lingerie ribbon. Met Mr. Wingate. You know it really is a decentish department store. But his advertising is simply the limit. I told him so.

[*Bradley whistles. Bernard and Eunice start.*]

GRANNY

The very idea! Eunice, how can you permit her to be so rude?

LOIS

Rude? I was philanthropic! I told him his advertising antedated Barnum. You should have seen him open his mouth. (*Laughs*) He was pussy up a gum-tree. But I got myself in for it. He made me go into the tea-room and have tea with him. Would n't

let me escape until I 'd told him just the sort of copy should be sent to the press. I did n't get home till twenty minutes ago.

GRANNY

How 'd you get here?

LOIS

In a cab. Had to have the fare charged, Dad. It was raining like blazes.

[*Eunice sneezes again.*]

GRANNY

Your mother walked.

BERNARD (*angered*)

What? Eunice, why did you?

LOIS

Where's Hugh?

BRADLEY

Dagmar's, of course.

GRANNY

He was to pick your mother up at —

EUNICE (*cutting in*)

Oh, Mother!

BERNARD (*angered*)

He did n't meet you as he said he would?

BRADLEY (*laughs*)

Ha! Listen to this — (*reads from newspaper*) —

“Mr. Leo Day is dining with Mr. and Mrs. Bernard Ingals and family this evening.”

GRANNY

Who put that in the paper?

BRADLEY

He must have. I say, Dad, is he really a climber?

BERNARD (*worried*)

I 'm afraid so.

LOIS

But where is he?

BRADLEY

My fault. But I'm not sorry now.

EUNICE

Bradley!

BRADLEY

If he was just trying to use us.

LOIS

What happened?

BRADLEY

The gas would n't burn.

LOIS

"Would n't burn?"

BRADLEY

Oh, that's right, you were n't here for lunch. There was water in the pipes then. Mother tried to complain but the line was always busy. I agreed to stop at the office but forgot to. When I came in at five-thirty Rhoda met me — looked like Niobe. (*Lois and Bradley laugh.*) There was no gas at all. And the office was closed.

BERNARD

You telephoned Day not to come?

BRADLEY

No, he called to know what time dinner was. Inasmuch as there was n't any gas, I told him I did n't see how there *could* be any dinner here to-night.

GRANNY

That's the one intelligent thing you've done since you've been home.

BRADLEY

Oh, Granny, thanks.

BERNARD

Why did n't you tell your mother he was n't coming?

BRADLEY

She was n't home. I had to go downtown on an errand. When I got back she was —

BERNARD (*breaking in*)

Cooking it on a chafing dish, a flat-iron —

EUNICE

It does n't matter, Bernard. I should have attended to it myself.

LOIS (*laughs*)

Oh, won't Mr. Day be furious!

BERNARD

I 'm afraid he will.

BRADLEY (*rises*)

But he 's at least got it newsed about. That 's what he was after.

[*Telephone rings. Bernard answers it.*]

BERNARD

Hello . . . Yes, Kimberley . . . Certainly . . . I 'll be here . . . Any time. [*Hangs up receiver.*]

EUNICE

Anything wrong, Bernard?

BERNARD

Kimberley wants to see me. He 's coming here.

GRANNY

Kimberley? Here? I 'm going out!

LOIS (*to Bradley*)

How in the world do you happen to be dressed so early?

BRADLEY

Did it so you would n't be hollering at me to get out of the bathroom. Dad, we really do need another bathroom.

EUNICE (*rises*)

Lois, you have n't had any dinner.

LOIS

Don't feel hungry. [*Puts on her wrap.*]

EUNICE

But you must have something. I'll have Rhoda —

LOIS

But I really don't care for anything. And Clem will be here any minute. Did he send me flowers?

BRADLEY

Men don't any more. Girls'd rather fellows had something on their hips. (*Gives Lois a telegram which he's had in his pocket*) Oh, I forgot. Here's a wire that came for you.

LOIS

Oh! (*Takes it; sits on sofa*) Put on my boots, will you, Brad? (*While Bradley is putting on her carriage boots, Lois opens the telegram and reads.*) Oh, marvelous! It's all fixed. Elise and I are to be at 30 Green next year.

BRADLEY

That's great, Sis.

EUNICE

You're moving?

LOIS

Yes. It's the best house at 'Hamp. Don't tie them, Brad.

BRADLEY (*rises*)

Up goes her allowance.

LOIS (*rises*)

No, sir. It is more expensive but the food's so good we won't have to go out for meals all the time.

BRADLEY

You ought to see Elise, Dad. She's there!

EUNICE

I never dreamed you planned a change. Tell me about it.

[*Doorbell rings.*]

LOIS (*rises; throws on her wrap*)

That's Clem. Let him in, Bud. (*Bradley goes to the hall.*) I've some pictures I'll show you in the morning. Our whole crowd'll be there.

[*Goes toward hall.*]

BRADLEY (*at door*)

Hello, Clem.

CLEM

Hi, Brad. Lois ready?

LOIS (*going into hall*)

Wasting time waiting.

CLEM

By George, Lois, you do look kissable!

LOIS

Why don't you tell me some news? Coming with us, Bud?

BRADLEY

Sid's picking me up later.

CLEM

So long then.

BRADLEY

Save me a dance, Sis.

[*Closes door.*]

GRANNY

When I was a girl I at least said good-night to my mother and father. Is that out of fashion too? (*Rises; angered*) Oh! I'm going in next door — to see Mrs. Holding.

[*Bradley reënters.*]

BRADLEY

Shall I walk over with you?

GRANNY (*looks him up and down*)

No, thanks.

[*Goes into hall and leaves house presently.*]

[*Pause. Bradley lights a cigarette. Eunice is sitting motionless, her eyes in her lap. Bernard moves back and forth; he is worried.*]

BRADLEY

What's the matter, Dad? Indigestion?

BERNARD

No.

BRADLEY

You seem off your pegs to-night, too.

BERNARD

Had rather a hard day.

[*Eunice looks up, sharply.*]

BRADLEY

Are they riding you at the City Hall?

BERNARD

Kimberley took my stenographer away a week ago — insisted on giving the job to a friend of his. I've had to do all her work over.

BRADLEY

Why in the world do you stand for it? (*Bernard does not reply. Pause. Bradley goes to the sofa*)

Hang, I'm not keen for this dance to-night. Not much fun in being a stag.

EUNICE

Why did n't you invite some girl?

BRADLEY

Did n't get around to it in time. It's hardly fair to invite them in September for parties in December. And you have to if you want a girl. (*Stretches out on the sofa*) Besides, how do I know I'll want to take her when the time comes? This whole woman business is pretty much of a nuisance, Mother.

EUNICE

Have you become a misogynist too?

BRADLEY

Hardly! I thrill to them too much. That's the nuisance. Ever read any D. H. Lawrence, Dad?

BERNARD

No.

BRADLEY

He sizes women up as deadly. They destroy — or want to. He thinks they should only be a functional thing with men. Course that'd do away with the family — but that would n't be so bad.

BERNARD (*surprised*)

What? You're against the family as an institution?

BRADLEY

Naturally! Every one'd be a whole lot better off if the children were brought up by the State. You'd probably be taxed so much a head for us — but you should n't even have that responsibility. It's coming. Things are all wrong as they are now.

BERNARD

But, Brad, don't you feel — why, your mother —

BRADLEY (*breaking in*)

Oh, I know what you're going to say, but that's sentimentalism. I'm all for the complete freedom of the individual, and sloppiness and family life raise Cain with it. I say, hand me that ash-tray, will you? I'll spill the ash if I get up. (*Bernard hands him a tray.*) Thanks. Yes, sir, the sooner the family disappears as an institution the sooner the complete freedom of the individual will come. Sentimentality will disappear then. And sentimentality is enervating.

BERNARD (*is really disturbed*)

But see here, Brad —

BRADLEY (*breaking in*)

Just a minute, Dad. Take yourself — you really are a good sort.

BERNARD

Oh, come on!

BRADLEY

Oh, I'm not going to ask for money. Remember I sold that Ford. When you got through high school you were all for being a horticulturist, were n't you?

BERNARD

I'd thought of it.

BRADLEY

Well, why did n't you go through?

BERNARD

Well, I — Father really needed me in the store.

BRADLEY

You see — sentimentalism — you sacrificed yourself.

BERNARD

He was n't well — he'd always been kind to me.

BRADLEY

Why should n't he have been? He was your father. But when the store was sold, why did n't you go in the nursery business then?

BERNARD

Oh — I don't know —

BRADLEY

Because of Mother and us?

BERNARD

There were reasons.

BRADLEY

Were you afraid? (*Bernard does not answer.*) I'd like to see any one persuade me to give up my life. Nothing can stop me. And our crowd's taken a solemn oath never to sacrifice art to money, no matter what the circumstances may be. This summer in Maine under Stiles will help me worlds. And when I've had a year or two in Europe I'll really be ready to get started.

BERNARD

You want to go to Europe after graduation?

BRADLEY

Ted and I've got it all fixed for summer after next. (*Rises; throws his cigarette into the fire*) Life's a damn fine thing if you know how to use it. (*Pause. Stretches*) Mother, have I any clean white kid gloves?

EUNICE

I put a pair in the top drawer of your chiffonier this morning.

BRADLEY

Fine! [*Turns and goes upstairs.*]

[*Pause. Bernard and Eunice are deep in their own*

thoughts which are not happy. Then he turns, goes to her, and takes her hand.

BERNARD

My dear — he does n't know — he does n't mean —

EUNICE

I wonder.

BERNARD (*surprised*)

What?

EUNICE

Am I getting old, supersensitive — ? They seem to have become so callous, flippant —

BERNARD

They 've really hurt you?

EUNICE

We seem to mean — (*breaking off*) But it's not we I'm thinking of. Oh, Bernard, we're responsible for what they are. Have we done the right thing?

BERNARD

We did what we thought was right.

EUNICE

We wanted to give them as fine a start as we could — to educate them — to let them know what is good and true. That's what we wanted to do. But have we bungled? (*Bernard turns away.*) Answer me, Bernard.

BERNARD

I don't know, I don't know.

EUNICE

If our giving has injured them —

[*The doorbell rings loudly. Bernard and Eunice are checked. Draw themselves up.*]

BERNARD

I guess that's Kimberley. You better go upstairs,

dear. (*Eunice rises; goes upstairs. The bell is rung again, insistently. Bernard sighs, braces himself; is obviously determined to keep himself under control; but he dreads the meeting. Goes into the hall and opens the door. Cordially*) Good evening.

KIMBERLEY (*gruffly*)

I want to talk to you.

BERNARD

Come in, please. Furious rain, was n't it? (*Kimberley comes into the living room followed by Bernard. The former is a large, big-bellied, coarse-grained man of fifty. He's had a drink or two. He does not take off his hat during the scene.*) Won't you have a chair?

KIMBERLEY (*slops into a chair*)

Who in the devil do you think you are, Ingals? God almighty?

BERNARD

Why — what do you mean?

KIMBERLEY

You fired Miss Plummer this afternoon.

BERNARD

I told her I did n't think she was able to do the work.

KIMBERLEY

Who gave you authority?

BERNARD

I've always been allowed to manage my own office.

KIMBERLEY

Who put her there?

BERNARD

You did.

KIMBERLEY

Do you think I did that just to give you a chance to fire her?

BERNARD

I did n't fire her. I've had to correct every single letter and statement she's written. She's resented my asking her to rewrite — seems not to want to learn. I told her we'd have to knuckle down to it — perhaps I was a little sharp — my patience was almost at an end —

KIMBERLEY

And I've just about reached the end of mine. I found the poor little thing waiting for me when I got home — weeping. She said you insulted her.

BERNARD

Oh, believe me —

KIMBERLEY (*cutting in*)

Who do you think you're working for?

BERNARD

The city.

KIMBERLEY

You're not! You're working for five councilmen and I'm one of them. (*Bernard clinches his fists, trying to keep himself under control.*) I fired Miss Jackson to give Miss Plummer the job, did n't I?

BERNARD

Yes.

KIMBERLEY

Well, do you think I did that just so you could turn round and let Miss Plummer out in a week?

BERNARD

I've told you I did n't.

KIMBERLEY

But you bawled her out so that you hoped she would go?

BERNARD

I'm sure she can never do the work, Kimberley, and I don't believe she has any desire to. (*Kimberley smiles.*) I'm only allowed one stenographer. If she is n't efficient — well, you can see where I'm at.

KIMBERLEY

Anything else?

BERNARD

I'd like Miss Jackson back.

KIMBERLEY

Ha! Just what I thought. A friend of yours, isn't she?

BERNARD

She worked in the office for ten years.

KIMBERLEY

Competent?

BERNARD

Very.

KIMBERLEY

Liked to have her in your office?

BERNARD

Yes.

KIMBERLEY

Well, Miss Plummer is a particular friend of mine. I'm your boss. I put her in your office and I want her to stay there. I expect you to apologize.

BERNARD (*furious*)

What? (*Then getting himself under control*) You're making it very difficult for me. I've been assessor for eighteen years. There's never been any

complaint of the way I've done the work. But I don't seem to be able to satisfy you. Is it a feeling you have against me personally? It's getting almost unbearable.

KIMBERLEY

Then why don't you quit?

BERNARD

Why —

KIMBERLEY

You've had the job for eighteen years. Don't you think it about time some one else — or do you think you're indispensable? You're not!

BERNARD

You mean — you want me to get out?

KIMBERLEY

Did you scurry around and help elect me? Fat chance! But I'm in office. And I want the people who worked for me, my friends, around me. And I'm not the only councilman who feels that way — and about you too.

BERNARD

I did n't realize it was a game you were playing to get me out.

KIMBERLEY

Either you do what I want you to do or I swing things against you. It's coming, Ingals! And don't forget Miss Plummer stays at her desk.

BERNARD

But, good God, Kimberley, I can't let incorrect statements leave the office, I can't see to every detail myself —

KIMBERLEY (*breaking in*)

It's your woman or mine.

BERNARD

What?

KIMBERLEY

And naturally it 's mine.

BERNARD (*beside himself*)

Get out of here! Get out at once!

[*Kimberley rises, smiles. Raises his shoulders, drops them, and goes out. The street door bangs. Bernard pulls a fountain pen from his pocket; goes quickly to desk. Sits and writes. Bradley comes downstairs; opens street door.*

BRADLEY (*calling*)

Just a minute, Sid.

SID

Make it snappy.

[*Bradley puts on his coat and hat. Bernard addresses an envelope, puts letter inside; seals envelope.*

BRADLEY (*at living-room entrance*)

Well, I'm off. (*Sees letter in Bernard's hand*)

Letter to mail? (*Takes it out of Bernard's hand*)

I'll post it. (*Turns*) Good night. (*Leaves house*)

[*Bernard does not move for a moment. Bradley has acted so quickly that the former scarcely realizes what's happened. Then he becomes frightened.*

BERNARD

God! What have I done? (*Hurries to street door and opens it, calls*) Brad! Brad! [*The cut-out of a motor is his only answer. After a moment Bernard returns to the house. He is terrified at what he has done, amazed at himself. He paces back and forth. Then he goes quickly to the desk. Picks up telephone.*.)

Hello, hello . . . River 7934. Please . . . Hello. This is Bernard Ingals speaking. Do you know when Mr. Kimberley is expected back? As soon as he comes in — I know he's not there now, but *when he comes* ask him to call me . . . Ingals; Barnes 4652. Please, don't forget. I must see him at once. [*Hangs up receiver. Eunice comes downstairs. She carries a small basket containing hose to be mended*]

EUNICE (*goes to Bernard*)

Bernard, I'm sorry I spoke as I did. Please forget if you can. I let my nerves get the better of me, that's all. (*Eunice begins to hum cheerfully, goes to large table. Bernard drops down on the sofa. As Eunice puts her basket on the table she catches sight of Bradley's portfolio which lies there.*) Oh, Bernard, did you see these? [*Picks up portfolio.*]

BERNARD

What, Eunice?

EUNICE

Bradley's sketches. He was showing them to me this morning. (*Eunice rises, goes toward Bernard, untying portfolio as she goes. Stands in back of him; hands him one of the sketches*)

This is his setting for the first act of *Louise* — you remember — her home. Don't you feel the depression, how it almost stifles her?

BERNARD

Yes —

EUNICE (*handing him another sketch*)

This is Montmartre — he's caught their mood. (*Handing him a third sketch*) And here's the street, Paris at night. Are n't you interested?

BERNARD

Yes, yes. They're fine, Eunice, fine.

EUNICE (*giving him a fourth sketch*)

And this is for the ballet his friend Ted's written.
Is n't it beautiful?

BERNARD

Very.

EUNICE

Oh, he has talent. I'm sure of it.

[*Bernard rises quickly.*]

BERNARD

Where is that dance to-night, Eunice?

EUNICE

At Brenfield Hall.

BERNARD (*going toward telephone*)

Do you know the telephone number?

EUNICE

I don't.

[*Bernard looks for it in the book. Eunice is surprised, anxious. But she says nothing. She picks up the drawings and puts them in the portfolio while Bernard is at the telephone.*]

BERNARD

Hello, River 600 . . . Yes . . . He should be there now . . . (*Hangs up receiver*) Line's busy. (*Eunice carries the portfolio to the table. Bernard moves back and forth for a moment. Then goes to telephone again*) Hello . . . Eunice, what was that number?

EUNICE

I think you said River 600.

BERNARD

River 600 . . . I must get them, Operator. Cut in

if necessary . . . Then call me when the line's free.
[*Leaves telephone.*]

EUNICE

Can I do anything, Bernard?

BERNARD

I gave Brad a letter to mail. It must n't go.

EUNICE

He 'll probably forget it, dear.

BERNARD

Not when I don't want him to mail it. Eunice, you call him. (*Turns toward hall*) I 'll walk on down in case — (*Telephone rings. Bernard hurries to it.*) Hello? Has Bradley Ingals come in? . . . You 're sure? Well, will you please ask him to call his house as soon as he does? *Please*, don't forget. (*Hangs up receiver*) He 's not there yet. Oh, if I knew where I could find him!

EUNICE

Bernard, what 's happened? I have n't seen you so excited —

BERNARD

It 's nothing, dear. I think I 'll go to the postoffice — (*Goes to desk, takes an envelope from pigeonhole*) Yes, the street address is on the envelope. I can identify it.

[*Turns toward hall.*]

EUNICE

Dear, you can't get into the postoffice this time of night.

BERNARD

I must.

EUNICE

Wait and see if Bradley has mailed it. He would

have put it in a box — not gone way around to the postoffice. And if he did mail it you can send a telegram asking them to disregard the letter.

BERNARD

That would n't do — they 're just waiting for — Oh, Eunice, is n't it awful how much you can do in a moment of rage?

[Breaks off; drops into chair at left of sofa.]

EUNICE (*goes to him*)

Nothing could hurt so much as to have you keep something that 's troubling you from me.

BERNARD

Oh, I 've been a fool — an impetuous, mad fool. Eunice, I 've resigned.

EUNICE

What?

BERNARD

Given up my position — as though I were wealthy, independent —

EUNICE

I don't understand.

BERNARD (*quickly and excitedly*)

Kimberley was here — he provoked me — drove me — I lost my temper — I guess that 's what he 's been trying to do — I did n't see.

EUNICE

Driving you?

BERNARD

For weeks — ever since the new council came into office — it 's been hell there at the City Hall. Day 's been threatening. To-night Kimberley practically said I had to be his slave to hang on — he said — he made me wild — I ordered him out of the house —

and then I actually wrote out my resignation and gave it to Brad to mail.

EUNICE

Bernard!

BERNARD

Kick me, call me fool, idiot —

EUNICE

No!

BERNARD

I deserve everything.

EUNICE

I'm glad you did what you did.

BERNARD (*amazed*)

Eunice!

EUNICE

Why did n't you resign when they first began — ?
(*Telephone rings.*) Let me go.

BERNARD

I'll —

EUNICE (*goes quickly to telephone*)

It's Brad — I'll talk to him. (*At telephone*) Hello,
. . . yes, Brad — that letter your father gave you
to mail — well, put it in the box *now*.

BERNARD

Eunice! No! (*Hurries toward telephone*) No!

EUNICE

Yes. At once!

[*Hangs up receiver.*]

BERNARD

Eunice, what have you done? (*Eunice does not answer.*) It must n't go. (*Starting to desk*) I'll call him.

[*Eunice picks up the telephone.*]

EUNICE (*shaking her head*)

No.

BERNARD

Are you crazy? Don't you see what it means?

EUNICE

I won't let you make a slave of yourself.

BERNARD

Oh, stop thinking about *me!* I must get hold of Kimberley — I'll apologize — I'll manage with Miss Plummer somehow — Eunice, give me that telephone. And I must see Day. We'll invite him to come here.

EUNICE

Oh, Bernard, why have you been so afraid? Have you lost your grip?

BERNARD

Eunice, don't you see? I've got to have a job.

EUNICE

Are you afraid you can't get one elsewhere?

BERNARD

Can a man of my age just walk into a good salaried position? Have n't I already tried to find one?

EUNICE (*sitting on sofa*)

I'd rather starve than have you lick boots.

BERNARD

Yes, I know you'd go through with me. But what about them — our children? (*Eunice starts.*) If I've no job they can't go back to college, and — (*Eunice rises.*) You see now? (*Pause*)

EUNICE (*loudly and fearfully*)

Oh, Bernard, what have we done? (*Sits*)

BERNARD

"We?" You've nothing to blame yourself for. (*Sits beside her*) I'm the one who has failed them.

EUNICE (*taking his hand*)

Oh, I love them so, and I'm afraid.

BERNARD

What will they do? What will they say?

EUNICE (*terrified*)

Suppose they — No, no! I can't. Bernard, we must do something.

BERNARD

I'll fix it some way. I'll go to the City Hall early in the morning. I'll get that letter. I'll make Kimberley and Day —

EUNICE

No.

BERNARD

I can even play their game if necessary.

EUNICE

You can't go back there.

BERNARD

Of course I can. It's not so bad.

EUNICE

To let you dishonor yourself to give them money — no. That would be like having you steal for them. It would be criminal of you and me. They can't have it if that's the price.

BERNARD

I've been looking for a position; I tried to borrow more this afternoon. (*With a new idea*) Eunice, I won't be able to borrow at all if I have no security.

EUNICE (*rises*)

Oh, if I could do something!

[*The street door is opened.*

GRANNY

Good night, Mr. Holding. Thanks for walking home with me.

A MAN'S VOICE

Good night. Come over again soon.

[Granny closes street door; enters living room. She wears a long coat and has a scarf thrown about her head. Eunice has one desperate hope.]

EUNICE (*assumes a cheerful manner*)

Hello, Mother. Did you enjoy yourself?

GRANNY

I passed the time. (*Eunice helps her take off her coat.*) Mrs. Holding read it in the paper, of course. Wanted to know how Day behaved at the table. Thank goodness I could say he was n't here. (*Sits in chair at left of sofa*) I tell you it was Providence made Bradley forget to complain about the gas. (*Slight pause*) It's nice and peaceful here now. They must all be out.

EUNICE (*sits on sofa*)

Mother, I want to ask you to do something for me.

GRANNY

What?

EUNICE

It's not for any one else. It's just for me.

GRANNY

Don't beat about the bush. If it's to ask me not to talk about that Day person you might just as well save your breath.

EUNICE

I want to borrow some money, Mother.

BERNARD

Eunice!

[*Eunice silences Bernard. He turns to the fireplace.*]

GRANNY

Oh! (*Slight pause*) To buy Lois a new dress?

EUNICE

It 's more than that.

GRANNY

What does she want now? A mink coat?

EUNICE (*bursting out; unable to control her overwrought nerves*)

Oh, Mother!

BERNARD

Don't, Eunice!

GRANNY (*alarmed by Eunice's manner*)

Eunice, what is it?

EUNICE

Bernard and I are in trouble.

GRANNY (*anxiously; starting to rise*)

What?

EUNICE

He 's lost his positoin.

GRANNY (*breaking in; sympathetically*)

Oh, Bernard! How did it happen?

BERNARD (*starting to correct Eunice's statement*)

I—

EUNICE

I'll explain later. The point is that we must have some money right away.

GRANNY

Why, of course, I'll be glad to tide you over. How much do you want?

EUNICE

Two or three thousand.

GRANNY

What?

EUNICE

It was three thousand last year, was n't it, Bernard?

BERNARD

About that.

EUNICE

We'll cut it down as low as possible. But we must be sure of enough for the rest of this year and —

GRANNY (*breaking in*)

This year? There are only two more days in this year.

EUNICE

I mean this college year.

GRANNY (*the truth dawning on her suddenly*)

Oh, I see! (*Momentary pause*) You've no position in sight, Bernard?

BERNARD

Not now.

GRANNY

And nothing much in the bank?

BERNARD

No.

GRANNY

Not even sure where your own bread's coming from. (*Bursting out*) But you'll borrow to keep them in luxury!

EUNICE

Mother, there's been no luxury!

GRANNY

Oh, you fools!

EUNICE

Will you help us?

GRANNY

You, yes! But give my money to allow you to go on spoiling them — not one penny. You've made them vain, empty-headed —

EUNICE (*breaking in*)

That's not true.

GRANNY

It is. You know it. They've no respect for any one or anything, — certainly not for me or you.

EUNICE

Mother, stop it, stop it!

GRANNY

For years you've denied yourself for them. With the money Bernard's father left him, he could have gone into business for himself. No, it had to be saved for them. It saw Hugh through college. But what's he done in the six years since he graduated? Has he paid you back?

BERNARD

We never wanted or expected him to.

GRANNY

And for the last two and a half years everything you could get your hands on has gone to the twins. You've simply poured affection on them — you wanted to keep them laughing. From the time they were infants — you dropped everything to answer their demands.

EUNICE

To find out why they asked for it — sympathy —

BERNARD

Eunice, what's the use?

GRANNY

Well, you ought to see what your sympathy has done

for them. I don't blame the children — it's not their fault — but yours. You've only yourselves to blame.

EUNICE

Don't think of them. Think of me. I'm asking you —

GRANNY

That's what I am doing. (*Rises*) And I say no. Oh, I pity you, you fools. But you must face it. You've had it coming to you.

EUNICE

What do you mean?

GRANNY

What do you think they're going to do *now*?

[*Turns and goes upstairs. Pause.*]

BERNARD

I'm going to Kimberley. It may be useless, but —

EUNICE (*cutting in*)

It is. You say yourself they've been trying to get rid of you. (*Thinking aloud*) I could rent their rooms — but that would n't be enough — bake — give music lessons —

BERNARD

If this only had n't happened for a year or so.

EUNICE

Is n't there any one we can turn to?

BERNARD

Even friends won't speculate on your children. I'll do anything — any kind of work — but I can't help them unless the salary amounts to something. And where can I find a position like that in less than a

week — we can't send them unless — They must be told.

[*Pause.*]

EUNICE

What will they do? We're afraid to face it, Bernard. Afraid lest we have — (*breaks off*) Come sit here beside me.

[*Bernard does. Eunice takes his hand.*]

BERNARD

They're dancing now. Lois looked so beautiful. Hugh's with Dagmar — I'd hoped I could help him a bit. What a New Year for them — and for you.

EUNICE

I love you, Bernard. You've always been so sweet to me. You've given me only happiness.

BERNARD

This, "happiness"?

EUNICE

What's going to happen now? But we'll always have each other. And if there's any guilt, I share with you. We're one.

[*Pause.*]

BERNARD

Don't tell them to-night. Let them be happy while they can be.

EUNICE

How long the night will be — but I don't want it to pass. (*Pause*) The fire's gone low. (*They sit, quietly, motionless, looking down at the fire.*) It's in moments of crises — (*Breaks off; rises suddenly*) Oh, I can't sit still and think. Let's do something — let's walk — fast — till we're tired —

(*Eunice turns toward the hall, quickly. Bernard looks after her for a moment, then follows. They do not speak while they are putting on their wraps. Bernard opens the street door.*) Leave the door unlocked. One of them may have forgot his key.

[*They go out. Granny hurries downstairs, immediately. She is afraid they are starting out to look for funds for the children. She goes to one of the windows, but Bernard and Eunice have passed out of sight. She turns, thinks for a moment, makes a decision. Goes to the desk and picks up the telephone.*]

GRANNY

Operator, give me Geoffrey Carroll's . . . Dagmar, I want to speak to Hugh.

[*The curtain falls to indicate the passing of a half hour.*]

When it rises again, Granny is seated, waiting impatiently. Then she hears the children as they cross the veranda.

Lois, Hugh, and Bradley enter. They are alarmed but earnest and controlled. They have come in haste; Hugh and Bradley have not put on their coats.

HUGH

Well, what is it? What's happened?

[*Granny sits looking at them intently. She is annoyed by Hugh's tone.*]

LOIS

Is one of them ill — hurt?

BRADLEY (*pleadingly*)

Granny, please?

HUGH

You telephoned me to get the twins. Where are Mother and Father?

GRANNY

They 've gone out.

HUGH

Then —?

LOIS (*breaking in*)

Grandmother, tell me this minute!

GRANNY

Oh! (*Rises; enraged by their tone*) Your father's lost his position. He's bankrupt. You can't go back to college. (*The children do not move.*) That's what's happened.

[*Furious, she turns and goes upstairs. There is complete silence. They do not move a muscle of their bodies. Finally Hugh speaks.*]

HUGH (*quietly*)

Poor Dad.

LOIS

Oh, where are they?

BRADLEY

It's beastly for him and Mother.

[*There is another silence. Lois drops into a chair.*]

LOIS (*with a movement of her hands*)

Like that . . . everything. (*Loudly*) No, no! I don't believe it.

BRADLEY

Kimberley was here —

HUGH (*almost with a cry; as though she were slipping away from him*)

Dagmar!

LOIS (*turning toward Hugh; surprised*)

What? (*Then realizing what's in Hugh's mind*)

No, Hugh, no! Everything can't stop so suddenly.

BRADLEY (*very quietly*)

"You can't go back to college."

[*The matter is settled as far as he's concerned.*]

LOIS

What does it mean? *Why?* Everything was all right. Bankrupt. There's always been money. Where's it come from if —?

HUGH

Dad's lost his position. (*Loudly*) Oh, don't you see? Everything has gone to us.

BRADLEY (*amazed*)

What?

HUGH (*loudly*)

Oh, God, what fools we've been! Oh, they had no right! It was wrong! I've never questioned.

LOIS

I could n't have taken if I'd known. I'm not so low.

BRADLEY

It makes us seem like bloodsuckers. (*Pause. Lois bursts out laughing.*) Don't! Sis!

LOIS

It is funny. Don't you see? The bottom's fallen out of everything. Where are we at? What's going to happen now?

BRADLEY (*loudly*)

I tell you it's wrong, wrong! They should n't have had this responsibility. Giving us till —

HUGH (*breaking in*)

"Responsibility?" It was love made them give.

LOIS

There's a girl at college. She never gets a letter from home but they tell her what they're sacrificing to keep her there. She's sick — a melancholic — her mind's warped —

BRADLEY

Dad wanted to be a horticulturist — he's sacrificed — No! You don't give up what you care for most! You can't! (*Suddenly realizing*) Oh, my God, for us, for us. We are what they care for most. (*Frightened*) Oh, what are we? (*Momentary pause*) Oh, to put such a burden on a person — to force him to live up to your ideals. It's too much! It is n't fair!

HUGH (*quietly*)

Life and love, Brad — you can't get away from it.

LOIS

But other parents — that girl at college — is that love?

HUGH

I don't know, I don't know.

LOIS (*trying to think it out*)

Selfish love, unselfish —

BRADLEY (*suddenly; pulling the letter from his pocket*)

Wait! I took this letter from Dad to mail. I forgot. Then they called me. Mother told me to put it in a box at once. But I could hear Dad shouting "No! No!" I did n't know what to do.

HUGH

Who's it for?

BRADLEY (*reading the address*)

"The Council of the City of —

LOIS (*cutting in*)

Open it.

[*Bradley is surprised; looks at them questioningly.*]

HUGH (*hesitates; then*)

Yes.

[*The children's distaste for this sort of thing is evident. But they feel the circumstance justifies, rather forces them, to open the letter.*]

BRADLEY (*unseals letter and reads*)

" . . . Please accept my resignation as City Assessor to take effect immediately. I cannot go on longer . . . "

LOIS

What? He resigned?

BRADLEY

"I cannot go on longer — " (*Breaking off*) Mother told me to mail it. Dad — (*Hugh takes the letter from Bradley; reads it.*) They told me at the hall my father was trying to reach me. But mother —

HUGH

I'd scarcely recognize his writing — why, he's even left an "s" out of assessor, a word he's written for years.

BRADLEY

Kimberley was here while I was upstairs — then Dad wrote the letter — Kimberley must have given him hell. By God!

[*Hurries to his coat; picks it up.*]

LOIS

Where are you going?

BRADLEY (*putting on his coat*)

Never mind!

HUGH

You say Dad did n't want it sent?

BRADLEY

No.

HUGH

He was ready to go back — so he 'd have money for us.

[Lois goes to Hugh quickly.]

LOIS

Give it to me.

HUGH

What are you going to do?

LOIS

Send it.

HUGH

Brad?

BRADLEY

Of course!

HUGH

Wait! Are you sure? You know what this means?

It is does n't go, you can go back to college.

BRADLEY (*with disgust*)

Oh, Hugh!

HUGH

Be honest with yourselves. Oh, *please*, no false sentiment. *Don't do anything you don't want to do.*

BRADLEY

Hurry, Sis! (*Lois goes to the desk and addresses an envelope.*) Give me the keys to the car, Hugh.

HUGH (*handing Bradley the keys*)

You won't forget this time?

BRADLEY

No.

[*Lois rises; puts the letter in the envelope; seals it. No more is said. Bradley takes the letter and leaves the house. Pause.*]

LOIS (*sits*)

Oh, Hugh, I thought I was different. When Mary Cavanaugh gave up her career and went home to keep house for her father, I laughed at her to myself. But to-night — when you came for me — I was afraid I might never be able to — talk to Dad again. (*Brief pause. She laughs.*) An individualist — I?

HUGH

They've given something to us, Lois — inside.

LOIS (*rises; goes to one of the windows*)

I wonder where they are. To go out this time of night — it's not like them.

[*Hugh goes to the telephone. Lois turns and looks at him.*]

LOIS

Where are you going to try and reach them?

HUGH

I was going to call Dagmar.

LOIS (*realizing what this means; hurries to him*)

Oh, Hugh, wait. Don't tell her now.

HUGH

No tears, Lois. Please. When they come —

LOIS (*her head high*)

How can you? (*Pause*) I wonder if Granny knows where they are.

[*Hurries upstairs. Left alone, Hugh stands motionless for a moment, thinking. He pulls a folding check book from his pocket.*]

HUGH

I want to. I *do* want to.

[He goes to desk; writes a check. Rises; tears the check from the book; puts it in his pocket. He picks up his coat and puts it in the hall. Then he goes to the fireplace to build up the fire. The wood basket it empty. He picks it up. It strikes him as a symbol. Then he starts to whistle a cheerful little tune and goes out through the dining room.]

After a moment or two, Bernard and Eunice come into the house. At first they do not speak. Then, as they are taking off their coats:

BERNARD

Are you terribly cold?

EUNICE

No. *(Pause)* How long have we been gone?

[Comes into the living room.]

BERNARD *(following her)*

An hour or so. *(Looks at his watch; surprised)* No.

It's just a half hour.

EUNICE

Is that all?

[Sits.]

They are tired, worn. And they have been suffering. They have been unable to forget for a minute. Bernard moves about.

BERNARD

Don't you want to go to bed, dear? You must be tired. *(Eunice rises and shakes her head.)* I've never known you to walk so fast. I had to hustle to keep up with you.

[Eunice goes to the table, hoping to find something out of order.]

EUNICE

They'll probably dance till early morning.

BERNARD

Yes.

[Eunice looks round for something to busy herself with.]

EUNICE

Oh, I must do something.

*[Goes quickly to bookcase; takes as many books from a shelf as she can hold in her hands; puts them on top of case.]*BERNARD *(watches her for a moment; then goes to fireplace)*

If you're staying up, I'm going to get some wood and relight the fire.

EUNICE

I'm not cold, dear.

[Takes more books from the case.]

BERNARD

It's brighter.

*[Bernard folds the screen; pokes the ashes from the fire-basket. A couple of books are slipping from Eunice's hand. She tries to catch them; all she holds fall to the floor. She starts to bend to pick them up. But shakes her head, trembles; the tears rush to her eyes; she sobs.]*BERNARD *(hurries to her)*

Dear!

EUNICE

I'm all right—all right.

[She gets herself under control and smiles at him. Hugh enters with a basket of wood. He is whistling. When he sees them he smiles, speaks cheerfully as though nothing had happened.]

HUGH

Hello! Been for a constitutional?

BERNARD (*faintly*)

Yes.

HUGH (*goes to fireplace*)

Thought I'd build up the fire. (*Bernard and Eunice look at each other, and the one silently tells the other to say nothing. Hugh speaks as he lays the fire; he is endeavoring to act naturally.*) It's a great night for a tramp. Dagmar and I walked to the lake and back. Sets you up wonderfully. (*Eunice motions to Bernard to pick up the books. She sits.*) By the way, I asked Dagmar to come over to breakfast to-morrow. You don't mind, Mother?

EUNICE

No, Hugh. I'm glad.

HUGH

That's fine.

[*Lois comes downstairs; pauses for a moment at the entrance.*

LOIS (*in a carefree manner, but she is exerting great self-control*)

Hello.

EUNICE (*rising*)

Lois! Why are you here?

LOIS (*goes to Eunice; puts her arm round her waist*)

Oh, I did n't like the dance. (*Withdraws her arm quickly for she realizes she will put too much into the embrace*) Chucked it.

EUNICE

Why — ?

LOIS

Clem was an ass. He proposed on the way *to* the party. Did you ever hear of such stupidity?

EUNICE

What did you do?

LOIS

Pretended he was joking. But he spoiled the dance. And besides, I wanted to talk to you. Won't you sit down — both of you? (*Bernard and Eunice sit.*) I've been a coward. I've put off telling you. Thought you might not like it. But I must 'fess up. And please remember I've made up my mind. (*Momentary pause*) I'm not going back to college. (*Bernard and Eunice draw in their breath sharply.*) I've had enough of it — at least for the present. Fed up.

[*Eunice and Bernard do not grasp why she is saying this.*]

BERNARD

But, Lois, I don't understand — you were so pleased about getting the new quarters for next year. You —

LOIS (*cutting in*)

I had n't found my courage to tell you. That was all. (*Eunice begins to comprehend.*) Do you — forgive me?

[*Before they can make any answer, Bradley bursts into the house in a disheveled condition.*]

BRADLEY (*in high spirits*)

Hello, every one!

EUNICE (*rising*)

Bradley!

BRADLEY (*throwing off his coat; laughing*)

Better look me over while you can: I'm liable to be arrested any moment.

BERNARD

What happened?

EUNICE

There's blood on your face!

BRADLEY

Oh, but you ought to see Kimberley's!

EUNICE

What?

BRADLEY

I've itched to beat him up ever since he kicked my dog about fifteen years ago. Well, to-night he was just going on to his porch as I drove by. Somehow the itch overcame me.

LOIS (*rushing to him*)

Brad.

[*Puts her arms around his neck and weeps.*]

BRADLEY

Great guns! Can you beat it, Dad? If a fellow can't get a girl's admiration any other way he can do it by showing her he's a few muscles.

EUNICE (*understanding; weeping*)

Bradley, come here, come here!

BRADLEY (*going to her*)

Why, Mother, what is it? (*Eunice puts her arms round his neck.*) By George! Even Mother falls for the vim and vigor stuff.

[*Lois goes to the telephone. Eunice wipes the spot of blood from Bradley's face during the next speeches.*]

LOIS

Western Union, operator.

BERNARD (*slowly*)

It wasn't Kimberley who kicked Nemo that time.
It was Sam Streeter.

BRADLEY

Was it?

LOIS

Take this wire, please. Miss Elise Bettle, Newton,
Mass. Change of plans. Not going back this year.
Cancel room reservation. Sign L-o-i-s.

BERNARD

No, Lois, no.

[*Drops into a chair. Eunice goes to Bernard.
Puts her hand on his arm.*]

LOIS

Charge it to Barnes 4652. Yes.

[*Hangs up receiver.*]

HUGH

Isn't that a fine fire? What's the saying — the
man who can't build one gets a . . . (*Wants to stop
but realizes he must finish*) . . . a poor sort of wife.

BRADLEY (*pulling a slip of paper from his pocket*)

Oh, Mother, that letter you told me to mail. (*Hands
her the slip*) I had it registered.

BERNARD

What?

BRADLEY (*laughs*)

At the drug-store. Just want to prove that for
once I had remembered to do something.

BERNARD

That settles it.

[*Seems to crumple up.*]

LOIS (*going to him*)

Don't, Dad, don't.

BERNARD (*rising immediately*)

You must know. I've done a very foolish, dastardly thing.

EUNICE

Bernard, please!

BERNARD

I've failed you. I've gone back on —

EUNICE (*breaking in*)

It's not true. Don't you believe him.

HUGH (*quietly*)

Dad, we know, all of us. Granny told us.

BERNARD

What?

BRADLEY

The council ousted you. That's all.

BERNARD

That is n't true. I —

HUGH (*quickly*)

Every one knows what they are. Of course they could n't appreciate you.

BERNARD

Hugh, please!

HUGH

You'll get into another berth — and a better one right away. But until you do, well you and Mother may feel just a little more comfortable if — (*Pulls the check from his pocket and tries to put it into Bernard's hand without the others seeing*) I don't need it just now. (*Laughs; whispers*) Bank on me.

[Bernard does not realize that it is a check; unfolds it.]

BERNARD

Oh, no!

EUNICE

You sha'n't, Hugh.

HUGH (*simply*)

I've never been able to do anything that's made me so happy.

BERNARD

Oh, God! Eunice —

HUGH

Oh, I wish I could tell you — there's so much — I don't know how to say it.

EUNICE

Hugh, if you kiss me, that will say —

[Hugh takes her tightly in his arms and kisses her.]

BRADLEY

You do know where we stand?

EUNICE

Yes. And I'm ashamed.

BRADLEY

Whatever do you mean?

[Eunice looks at the children. She seems to be begging for forgiveness. Then she speaks.]

EUNICE

Oh, I can't tell them, Bernard! But children, don't be afraid to show what you feel — ever.

LOIS

I don't understand.

EUNICE

Love's too beautiful to be hidden.

[Pause.]

BRADLEY

Good Lord, but I'm hungry.

LOIS

So 'm I. Why, I have n't eaten anything since tea.

EUNICE

I'll get a lunch.

HUGH

Come on, you twins. Let's raid the ice-box.

BRADLEY

Right! Sandwiches — dozens of them.

LOIS

We'll call when it's ready.

[*Lois and Hugh go into the dining room.*]

BRADLEY (*following them*)

And Dad, if a policeman should come, remember he has to show the warrant before he gets in.

[*Goes out. Slight pause. Then Bernard jumps to his feet.*]

BERNARD (*with great determination*)

God, I'm not beaten! Eunice, what must you think of me?

EUNICE

Dear, I understand.

BERNARD

I must carry on.

EUNICE

We can and we will.

BERNARD

Oh, Eunice, come, I'll get them to take me back.

EUNICE (*with a restraining gesture*)

Please.

BERNARD

If I can do for the children I sha'n't mind about Kimberley.

[Bernard crumples the check and throws it into the fireplace.]

EUNICE (*turns, faces Bernard, takes his hands in hers*)

No, dear. But we'll find some way.

BERNARD

Maybe they think they're going to run this roost now. God bless them! But they're not!

CURTAIN

ACT III

December thirtieth.

When the curtain rises Eunice, Dagmar, Hugh, and Bernard are talking in the dining room. Then Bernard's voice is heard distinctly.

BERNARD

You'll excuse me, won't you? I want to hurry along.

[Bernard comes into the living room. He is anxious but very determined. As he reaches entrance to hall, Hugh comes from the dining room.]

HUGH

Dad?

BERNARD

Yes, Hugh.

HUGH (*closes dining room door*)

Give me a minute — just a minute. After you'd gone upstairs last night I found that check I'd given you. I guess you thought you were burning it, but it fell on the hearth.

[Bernard presses Hugh's hand to show his thanks, but shakes his head.] I'll drop in the bank this morning and make a deposit to your account. (*Laughs*) It may be rather a job to convince them my check's worth anything. You know — the prophet in his own land.

BERNARD

Hugh, I do appreciate. Don't think I don't. But I can't accept.

HUGH

Rot!

BERNARD

No.

HUGH

It's mine to do with as I want. And I want you to have it. (*Awkwardly*) I've always — dreamed that some day I could do — something fine for you and Mother. (*Ashamed*) But I just forgot how much little things could mean. Oh, come on, Dad! You'll make me feel that we're not what we should be to each other — that something's wrong with me — if you don't.

BERNARD

Can't you understand?

HUGH

No. I talked to Mother last night and this morning. She — I've made her see it's all right.

BERNARD

You think I'm beaten.

HUGH

No, of course not! (*Slight pause*) I know you'd like to see the twins off to college next week. (*Bernard starts.*) They could go if you would. (*Holding out his hand*) And you will?

BERNARD

But, Hugh — your plans — your marriage — why —

[*The dining room door is opened.*]

EUNICE

I'll be right back, Rhoda.

HUGH (*whispering*)

The twins, Dad, the twins.

[*Eunice and Dagmar enter. Eunice looks at Bernard; seems to understand what he is thinking about; goes to him and takes his hand.*

(*Hugh pushes forward a chair; cheerfully*) Sit here, Dagmar. Is n't Rhoda *the* finest omelette maker?

DAGMAR

Are you getting ready to tell me I better take lessons from her?

HUGH

I did n't think of that. But *you* did. Better follow the hunch.

DAGMAR

You forget I must be back in New York in three days. I'd have to study at least a year.

[*Bernard looks at them; shudders slightly. Draws himself up; turns and goes into the hall. He leaves the house presently. Eunice picks up a memorandum pad from the desk.*

HUGH

Sit down, Mother, won't you?

DAGMAR (*rises*)

Please.

EUNICE

No. I must speak to Rhoda. (*Goes to Dagmar; simply and with moving sincerity*) Dagmar, I've waited — hoping to see you alone. I'm very happy that you're to be Hugh's wife, dear — and my daughter.

[Kisses her. Hugh turns away, clinches his fists. Eunice turns and goes into the dining room; closes the door.]

DAGMAR

I feel welcome, Hugh.

[Hugh starts to hurry to her, to crush her in his arms. But he stops.]

HUGH

They're bricks, both of them. They've always been so wonderful that I've just accepted their devotion as a matter of course.

DAGMAR

Maybe it takes — other children — to appreciate parents like yours.

HUGH

To think there had to be a smash before I — I'm so ashamed.

DAGMAR

"A smash"? What do you mean?

HUGH

Dad's lost his job, Dagmar.

DAGMAR

Oh, Hugh.

HUGH

He's pretty much broke.

DAGMAR

I'm sorry. (*Sits*) And nothing was said — oh, what sportsmanship. (*Hugh takes her hand and kisses it.*) Hugh, what is it? You watched me so closely at breakfast. Your eyes seemed to be pleading.

HUGH

Dagmar, we must change our plans a bit.

DAGMAR

Yes, Hugh?

HUGH

Dad needs money. I want to give him what I've saved. Do you mind?

DAGMAR

Why, Hugh!

HUGH

We'll not be able to furnish that apartment.

DAGMAR

We can be just as happy with rented furniture.

HUGH

It means more than that, dear. I want to help them all I can till Dad's squarely on both feet.

DAGMAR (*bravely*)

We're not to be married now?

HUGH

I'd like to ask that.

DAGMAR

Ask?

HUGH

Do you understand, dear, how I feel? I want to give to them. It is n't conscience. It's love. (*Slight pause*) So I have the courage to ask you to wait.

DAGMAR (*rises; faces him*)

Of course, Hugh.

HUGH

But do you understand?

DAGMAR

Yes, dear. It's beautiful.

HUGH

Oh, please!

DAGMAR

It is beautiful because it's love. Oh, don't ask me to explain why I know. Some children do things for their parents because of convention, public opinion, because they've been told it's the thing to do. If you did it just because you thought it your duty — as one's ashamed to pass a beggar — I believe I could hate you. But it's not sentimentality. It's real and true.

[Hugh takes her hungrily in his arms. Dagmar puts her arms round his neck.]

HUGH

My darling, I adore you. I want you, Dagmar. Don't think that I —

DAGMAR (*breaking in*)

It will be hard, dear, to wait. Sometimes I shall probably beg you to forget them. I will cry for you. Don't listen to me then. If you do, some day I'll not love you as I do now.

HUGH

Dagmar!

DAGMAR

But, Hugh, when the day comes — Oh, dear, if we can inspire such love in our children — then our love will take on greatness.

HUGH

But, dear, don't all children feel — why you —?

DAGMAR (*breaks in; leaves him; shakes her head*)

No.

HUGH

But —?

DAGMAR

Don't ask me. So many parents believe that simply

because they bring children into the world they take out a patent on their love — it belongs to them. But it's not instinctive — children have n't love for their parents unless that love's deserved.

HUGH

Dear, we will see each other. We will be together?

DAGMAR

Yes, Hugh.

[Dagmar takes his hands in hers. They stand still for a moment, looking intently into each other's eyes — seeing truth there.]

HUGH

Will you come with me — I want to go down to the bank — make a deposit for Dad?

DAGMAR

I'd like to see your mother — to thank her.

HUGH (*not understanding*)

We'll come back here.

[They go into the hall, put on their coats and hats.]

DAGMAR (*lightly*)

Oh, Hugh, I forgot to tell you: I saw old Mrs. Miller yesterday. You know how frightfully superstitious she is?

HUGH

Yes.

[Eunice comes into the living room; picks up telephone book. Looks for a number.]

DAGMAR

Well, she made me promise to wear "something blue." Said we'd surely have bad luck otherwise.

HUGH (*laughs*)

Oh, she did n't!

DAGMAR

Really!

[They leave the house. Eunice picks up the telephone.]

EUNICE

Good morning, Operator. . . . Main 9742, please.
(Granny comes into the living room.) Hello,
Mother. You *did* have your breakfast early this
morning.

GRANNY *(sits)*

I didn't sleep all night.

EUNICE

Oh, I'm sorry. Hello, give me the Want Ad department, please.

GRANNY

What? Is Rhoda leaving?

EUNICE

Will you take this advertisement? "Two furnished rooms to let after January third, 592 Huron Avenue." . . . That's all.

GRANNY *(aghast)*

Eunice!

EUNICE

Keep it in the paper until further notice. . . . Mrs. Bernard Ingals. Thank you.
[Hangs up receiver.]

GRANNY

What are you doing?

EUNICE *(straightens the pillows on the sofa)*

I'm renting the children's rooms when they go back to college.

GRANNY

You are not.

EUNICE

Yes, Mother.

GRANNY

Lodgers? Never! Do you realize this is my house?

EUNICE

Bernard and I rent it from you, yes.

GRANNY

Well I won't have it turned into a rooming house.

EUNICE (*puts the things on the large table in order*)

Then we'll rent another house.

GRANNY

Eunice Bradley! Have you taken leave of your senses? Oh, this is the last straw! "When they go back to college"? Have you forgot that they can't go?

EUNICE

Hugh's made it possible.

GRANNY

Hugh?

EUNICE

He's lending us the money. Oh, Mother, don't you see? It is n't the little things that reveal character. They'd seemed hard, indifferent. That's the outer spirit of the time. But if deep inside there's truth, who are we to criticize? Maybe they're finer. I believe they are. They're more honest and unafraid.

GRANNY

What have they done to make you talk this way?

EUNICE (*smiling*)

"What have they done?"

GRANNY

You think it will last?

EUNICE

If they had turned on us I could not have blamed them. I would have known I was the one who had failed. That's why I was afraid.

GRANNY

And now you're starting all over again — sending them back to college — renting rooms — Eunice, I won't have it! The Bradleys have always been one of *the* families here. Pioneers. For years all the important people have come to this house — why, it's an historic house. And now you want to rent it out piecemeal to persons —

EUNICE

There's no snob like a pioneer.

GRANNY

Oh, I can't understand you! Have you no pride?

EUNICE

What's happened now isn't going to happen again.

GRANNY

Well, I won't stand for it, Eunice. You're not going to rent any rooms in this house.

EUNICE

Oh, Mother, what difference does it make? It doesn't hurt you or me.

GRANNY

It does. (*Rises*) And what I said is final.

[*Lois and Bradley come into the house and into the living room. They're in very good spirits.*]

LOIS

Hello.

BRADLEY

Good morning.

[*They take off their coats.*]

EUNICE

When I came downstairs Rhoda told me you 'd gone out a half hour before. What in the world happened to you?

BRADLEY

Oh, we had a lot to attend to.

GRANNY

You were still downstairs talking at three this morning.

LOIS

I 'm sorry if we kept you awake.

BRADLEY

Is every one else out?

EUNICE

Yes.

GRANNY

Do you know what your mother has done?

EUNICE

Please.

GRANNY

She wants to rent rooms in this house.

[*The children start.*]

BRADLEY

Really? Well, I bet there are a lot of people who 'd like to come. (*Laughs*) I say, Mother, why not take Leo Day in? Oh, would n't he love it!

GRANNY (*disgusted*)

Oh!

LOIS

Mother, I would like to have a word with Granny. Is n't there some little thing you 'd like to see to upstairs?

EUNICE

I think I can find something.

LOIS

Thanks.

[Eunice goes into the hall and upstairs.]

GRANNY

What have you to say to me?

BRADLEY

A secret to tell you.

[Lois and Bradley seem to be preparing themselves for an ordeal.]

GRANNY

Well, what's this secret?

[Lois, unseen by Granny, motions to Bradley to begin. He pulls a cigarette from his pocket, then decides he better not smoke.]

BRADLEY

Granny, have you ever thought about dying?

[Granny starts.]

I mean that you are going to die some day?

LOIS (*discouraged*)

Oh, Brad!

GRANNY

Do you call that a secret? Or am I to be told that you're going to poison me?

BRADLEY (*as though grieved*)

Why, Granny! How can you say such a thing, even in jest?

LOIS

Don't you know we love you?

GRANNY

No soft soap, please. Do you know your parents are planning to send you back to college?

LOIS

Really?

BRADLEY

Oh, isn't that great of them, Sis?

LOIS

Yes, Brad.

[Lois and Bradley gently seat Granny on the sofa and sit on either side of her.]

BRADLEY

Granny, how much do you know of what's happened?

GRANNY

I know that your father's lost his job. That he's got no money. And that he's pretty much of a fool — and your mother too, though she is my daughter.

BRADLEY

And what do you think's going to become of him?

GRANNY

I can't see anything but the poorhouse or insane asylum.

LOIS

The asylum would be awful enough. But the poorhouse! The husband of a Bradley — maybe a Bradley herself. Oh, Granny, you could n't endure that.

GRANNY

Rather the poorhouse — there's more than one fine family ended there — than tradespeople, shop girls, clerks living here.

BRADLEY

What do you think of street cleaners?

GRANNY

Street cleaners?

BRADLEY

Ice-men, milkmen?

GRANNY

I don't!

LOIS

Well, Dad will have to do something. He's too able-bodied to get into the poorhouse.

GRANNY

What are you driving at?

BRADLEY (*seriously*)

Granny, he's fifty years old.

GRANNY

Fifty-one.

BRADLEY

It's going to be pretty difficult for a man of his age to step into a good position.

GRANNY

I dare say.

BRADLEY

A respectable one, I mean. Fine concerns want young chaps — like me, for instance.

GRANNY

Do they?

BRADLEY

Yes. Of course, the other fields are open to him — soda fountains, haberdashery stores, street-car conducting —

GRANNY (*already feeling herself insulted*)

What?

BRADLEY

He has n't your pride, Granny. He'll feel he must do something.

LOIS (*rises*)

Oh, Bud, would n't it be awful to see him carrying a sign through the streets — a sandwich man, everybody staring, saying "Eunice Bradley's husband," "Mrs. Roger Bradley's son-in-law."

GRANNY (*rises — unable to sit still*)

Stop it! Stop it!

BRADLEY

That Swede who runs the gasoline station on the corner — he's always been friendly — Sis, maybe he'd let Dad squirt gas into people's cars.

GRANNY

Oh, how can you?

LOIS

It's terrible, Granny. But we've got to face it.

GRANNY

Never!

LOIS

Then what can you suggest? We've racked our brains.

GRANNY

Can't you think of something that *is* all right?

BRADLEY

He might start a second-hand clothes store. (*Acting it out*) You know the way they come sidling up to you intimately on the street and sort of whisper — "Any old clothes to-day, Madam?"

GRANNY

I'd make Eunice divorce him.

LOIS

But she'd still be Mrs. Bernard Ingals.

GRANNY

Oh, can't you think of anything respectable for him?

LOIS

What can you suggest?

GRANNY

Think! Use your heads! What were you sent to college for?

BRADLEY

Let's see — the most respectable thing in the world — a church. Sis, he might get a job as janitor.

GRANNY

No, no!

LOIS

He'd have to mow the grass, shovel the snow —

GRANNY

I've got some money.

[Lois and Bradley seat Granny on the sofa again and take their places beside her.]

BRADLEY (*as though surprised*)

Have you really?

LOIS

How much would you be willing to stake?

GRANNY

I've got a few thousand dollars. It was to be his and Eunice's when I went on — yours some day — though lately I've been thinking of leaving it to charity.

BRADLEY

It was to be theirs?

GRANNY

Yes, of course, when I got through with it.

BRADLEY (*quietly*)

Granny, why not give it to them now?

GRANNY

What?

BRADLEY

It 'd mean a lot to them just now.

GRANNY

They 'd spend it on you — Oh, I see, this is your trick — (*Rises*) — they told you to do it — if I give them the money then you can go on.

[*The twins draw her back to the sofa.*]

LOIS

No, Granny, no!

BRADLEY

You can fix it so we can't have it.

GRANNY

There 's no way to do that.

BRADLEY

There is.

GRANNY

What do you mean?

LOIS

Granny, Noel Derby — he 's all right?

GRANNY

His father was here even before mine.

BRADLEY (*quickly*)

Well, you know, you 've heard, I 'd almost forgot, but Dad and he always have planned to go into the nursery business together?

GRANNY

Yes, go on.

LOIS

Mr. Derby has an option on a market gardener's place — just the spot to start a nursery.

GRANNY

How do you know?

LOIS

We saw him this morning.

BRADLEY

Dad can do anything with seeds. Think, Granny, the firm of Ingals and Derby, Nurserymen! Oh, please back him in this. He's always been so wonderful to all of us.

LOIS

He has been sweet to you.

BRADLEY

If you tell him you'll finance it, he'll say no. But if you could go in with Mr. Derby yourself as a silent partner, and then you appoint Dad, hire him to look after your interests — oh, Granny, would n't it be wonderful?

GRANNY

What have you been doing?

LOIS

There was n't much time. Mr. Derby'll be here any minute.

GRANNY

And where do you two come in on this?

LOIS

We don't.

BRADLEY

It's for Dad and Mother.

GRANNY

I'll have to think it over.

BRADLEY

Oh, what do you have to think?

GRANNY

You've had a tremendous amount of gall — to see Noel Derby, arrange —

LOIS (*breaking in; beseechingly*)

Oh, but Granny, it is so important.

[*Doorbell rings.*]

BRADLEY (*bounding into the hall*)

There's Mr. Derby now.

GRANNY

Wait!

LOIS

Can't!

BRADLEY (*opens door*)

Hello, Mr. Derby. Come in. It's all right.

LOIS

You can go upstairs and talk it over with him.

[*Helps Granny to rise.*]

NOEL

I don't believe you. (*Enters, followed by Bradley*)

Good morning, Mrs. Bradley.

GRANNY

How do you do, Noel.

LOIS (*leading Granny to hall*)

She's going upstairs where you can settle the details quietly.

BRADLEY (*turns Noel toward hall*)

No slip, please. And Granny: don't forget what will happen if you don't.

[*Granny and Noel disappear. Lois and Bradley are exhausted.*]

LOIS

Oh, dear! Do you think it's safe to leave her even for a moment?

BRADLEY

Noel won't let her escape. Oh, was it too rotten of us, Sis?

LOIS

As Othello says before he kills Desdemona: "It is the cause, oh my prophetic soul, it is the cause."

[Dagmar and Hugh come into the house.]

BRADLEY

But to have pictured such a fate for him. It seems indecent.

HUGH (*calling*)

Oh, Mother?

EUNICE (*upstairs*)

Yes, Hugh.

HUGH

We're back. Come down, will you? Dagmar'd like to see you.

[Dagmar enters.]

DAGMAR

Good morning.

LOIS

Oh, Dagmar.

BRADLEY

Hello, sister-in-law.

DAGMAR

You are early birds.

[Hugh enters. Lois, Dagmar, and Bradley sit.]

HUGH (*eagerly*)

You're back — well?

LOIS

Keep your fingers crossed — say your prayers —

HUGH

What did Mr. Derby say?

BRADLEY

He's upstairs with Granny now.

HUGH

And Granny — is it "yes"?

LOIS

Yes. It must be "yes."

[*Eunice enters.*]

EUNICE

Why is Noel Derby closeted with Granny?

BRADLEY

Patience, patience!

[*Bernard enters the house.*]

BERNARD (*calling excitedly*)

Eunice! Eunice!

EUNICE

Yes, dear. Here.

[*Bernard hurries into the living room. He is radiant.*]

BERNARD

It's all fixed, settled! They won't accept my resignation!

EUNICE

What?

BERNARD

Brad, you and Lois can go back just as you'd planned.

EUNICE

Dear, please explain.

BERNARD (*taking off his coat; exuberantly*)

I went into Day's office. He almost embraced me: his application for membership in the club was accepted. He thinks I'm responsible. He was furious — frightened — when he heard of the resignation. Would n't hear of my getting out. He called the councilmen together. Kimberley and Sands, of course, wanted to accept it. But Day, Teed, and Monroe refused. So I'm back. Oh, is n't it great! (*Eunice shudders. The others do not move; they are aghast.*) Oh, Brad, Kimberley has got a black eye. But he says he fell. (*Pause*) Well, can't any of you say anything? You might at least congratulate me. Lois, what's your chum's address? We'll wire her not to cancel that room reservation. [*Starts toward telephone.*

LOIS

Oh, damn!

BERNARD

Eunice, can't you speak?

EUNICE

I've nothing to say.

BERNARD (*amazed*)

Is something the matter with all of you? Do you realize what I've said? *I've got my job back!* Hugh, I don't need your assistance. And Lois and Bradley go east on Monday.

[*Eunice looks at the children; she scarcely dares breathe.*

LOIS (*rises quickly; goes to Bernard*)

Dad, I'm not going back.

BERNARD

Of course you are.

LOIS

I accepted a position this morning.

BERNARD

What?

LOIS

I'm going to work for Mr. Wingate.

HUGH

Lois!

BERNARD

Oh, I'm glad he wanted you, Lois. That's fine.
But he won't hold you. I'll call him.

LOIS

Please, Dad.

BRADLEY

I'm all tied up too.

HUGH

You?

BERNARD (*wheeling toward Bradley*)

What?

BRADLEY

I can't possibly get away. I dropped into the Bijou Theatre this morning. Don't suppose any of you know a stock company's playing there.

HUGH

Brad!

BRADLEY

The manager has a head on him: I'll bring money into the box-office. Every one in town'll go to see me carry a spear.

HUGH

You, an actor? Dad, this is preposterous!

BRADLEY

You forget that in high school I acted in *The Mer-*

chant of Venice, and darn well too. (*Laughs*)
Don't you remember, Mother? The chemistry teacher who coached the play said I'd the makings of a real Shakesperean actor?

BERNARD (*impressed*)

Brad, you would have done this?

BRADLEY

Oh, my real job is to help the scene-painter — though he does n't know it. Why, it's a real opportunity. I'll get a chance at some sets myself. I can have photographs taken, send them on to New York — why, it may lead to something big.

BERNARD

Oh, it's fine of you to have taken it this way. You did n't complain. You accepted things. I do appreciate.

BRADLEY (*alarmed*)

But, say, not a word to Granny about this now.

LOIS

Oh, heavens, no!

HUGH (*angered*)

To Granny or any one else! It's perfectly ridiculous.

BRADLEY

Hugh!

HUGH

Dad, they've got to go back to college.

LOIS (*to Hugh*)

You want Dad in the City Hall again?

HUGH

No. That is n't necessary. I've got —

BRADLEY (*breaking in*)

Hugh, don't you think you might keep out of this?

HUGH

No. Dagmar and I have —

DAGMAR

Dear, won't you let me explain? (*To Bradley*)
When we were out this morning we were able to raise
some money. It will see you and Lois through this
year.

LOIS (*cutting in*)

I've told you I'm not going back.

BRADLEY

Who'd lend Hugh money?

HUGH

It's been deposited to Dad's account.

LOIS

Dagmar, tell me the truth. It's the money for your
home.

HUGH

No.

LOIS

Is n't it, Dagmar?

DAGMAR

We've changed our plans. We're going to wait —

LOIS (*breaking in*)

Oh, what do you think I am?

BRADLEY

I agree with Hugh. Lois ought to go back.

LOIS

Bradley Ingals!

BRADLEY

It's my place to help.

HUGH

Keep still, Brad. It's all settled. You're both
going back.

BRADLEY (*to Hugh*)

I'd like to know what right you've got to —

LOIS

You act as though I were a Victorian calla-lily.

DAGMAR

Oh, please, dear.

LOIS

On your money?

BRADLEY

Be sensible, Sis. Listen to reason. I'm a man —

HUGH (*cutting in*)

You might just as well be quiet. Dad and Mother and Dagmar and I've arranged things. It's settled.

LOIS

Yes, it's settled. I go to work for Mr. Wingate.

BRADLEY

And I'm going into that stock company.

HUGH (*loudly*)

I tell you —

BERNARD (*more loudly and furiously*)

Silence! All of you! (*The children are amazed at this strange tone from Bernard, and to see him so angry.*) If you think you're going to run things here you're sadly mistaken. A lot of nerve you had, doing what you've done without my permission. But I still am boss.

HUGH

That's the stuff, Dad!

BERNARD

I mean you too. You're as bad as they are.

HUGH

But, Dad —

BERNARD

I don't want to hear another word from any of you.

EUNICE

Bernard!

DAGMAR (*turning toward hall*)

I think I'd better go.

BERNARD

No! You're in this too. Stay here. The twins go back to college.

BRADLEY

Dad!

BERNARD

And Dagmar and Hugh are getting married. (*To Hugh*) How dare you deposit money to my account?

HUGH (*weakly*)

I thought we'd —

BERNARD

Well, we had n't!

LOIS

I won't, Dad, I won't!

BERNARD

Did you hear me say to be quiet?

BRADLEY

But, Dad —

BERNARD

I meant it.

EUNICE (*appalled*)

Oh, what are we doing? We've never quarreled.

BERNARD

There's no quarreling. I've said my say and that's the end of it. (*Turns*) I'm going for a walk.

LOIS (*desperately*)

Mother, what can we do?

BERNARD

Don't try and get your mother mixed up in this. I'm going to buy your Pullman reservations. (*Hugh runs upstairs.*) Bradley, telephone the theater and resign at once.

BRADLEY

You've never talked to us this way before.

BERNARD

Not since the last time you tried to disobey me. I thrashed you then. I can do it again.

EUNICE

Oh, let's calm down. Let's —

BERNARD (*breaking in*)

Eunice, I asked you to be quiet.

EUNICE (*amazed*)

Bernard!

LOIS

I never knew you were such a stubborn —

BERNARD

You go and call up Mr. Wingate.

LOIS

I tell you I will not.

BERNARD

Lois, do as I say.

[*Noel enters the living room, hurriedly. He starts straight toward Bernard.*]

BERNARD

What are you doing here?

NOEL (*holding out his hand*)

At last, old man.

BERNARD

What 's the matter with you?

NOEL

I 've waited a long time for this.

[Granny enters with Hugh. Lois rushes to her and throws her arms round her neck.]

BRADLEY (*delighted*)

Oh, Granny!

BERNARD (*still gruffly*)

What are you grinning about?

NOEL

Have n't you been told?

BERNARD

Told what? My whole family seems to have gone insane. You too?

GRANNY

Noel has bought that market-gardener's place. I 'm going into partnership with him. And I 've engaged you to look after my interests.

BERNARD

What?

EUNICE (*overjoyed*)

Oh!

BERNARD (*puts his hand to his head*)

What 's this you 're saying?

GRANNY

I 'll pay you a salary — not much, but maybe some day I 'll sell out to you.

EUNICE (*going to her; much moved*)

Mother, you have done this?

GRANNY

I had to — to protect myself. I could n't have him a janitor.

BERNARD

What's this you're saying? "Janitor"? Will some one please explain.

GRANNY

You and Eunice would get my money when I died. I'm investing it so you won't be able to squander it.

BERNARD

But, Granny, I've a position.

GRANNY

What?

BERNARD

Yes. They would n't accept my resignation.

GRANNY (*amazed*)

Your resignation? You resigned? Why?

BERNARD

I lost my head.

EUNICE

That's not true. They were treating him like a dog.

BERNARD

Eunice!

EUNICE

I will tell. It got too much for him. He could n't endure it, it was n't humanly possible.

BERNARD

Eunice, will you please —

EUNICE (*talking over Bernard*)

And now he wants to go back to it again. Oh, it's too horrible.

LOIS

And yet you'd let him send us back to college. Oh, Mother, I did'n't know. But now that I do, do you

think I could forget for a moment even what he was enduring to keep me there?

BRADLEY

Can't you see what we'd be if we could go back and forget?

GRANNY

Well, you can't go if he goes in with Noel.

BERNARD

What?

GRANNY

The salary won't be big enough. I'll see to that.

HUGH

Yes, they can, Dad. I made that deposit. Here's the slip.

[Tries to give it to Bernard but the latter does not take it.]

BERNARD *(to Granny)*

There's a string to it? You mean I can't be my own boss in my private affairs? Thank you, no!

EUNICE

Mother does n't mean that, Bernard. But if you go back to the City Hall I'll leave you.

BERNARD, GRANNY, and NOEL

Eunice!

HUGH, LOIS, and BRADLEY

Mother!

DAGMAR

Mrs. Ingals!

EUNICE

I shall! I will not have that.

BERNARD

Eunice, how can you — ?

HUGH

He can't go, Mother. We won't let him.

BRADLEY

I'll black Kimberley's other eye if necessary.

BERNARD

It's a conspiracy.

LOIS (*putting her arm in his*)

Oh, Dad, don't you understand? You and Mother have always stacked the pack to give us all the face cards and aces. But you have taught us the game. We know how to play.

BRADLEY

We can't cheat.

EUNICE

But your work, children, we want you to go on with it.

BRADLEY

Whatever makes you think I sha'n't? Good Lord, you don't think I'd give it up?

BERNARD

But if you turn to something else —

BRADLEY

But I'm not. Why, I *need* the practical experience round the theater.

LOIS

I think I want to do advertising. But I sha'n't stick if I've a wrong hunch. Why, I may even end up a rum-runner. Or daub scenery — like Bud.

BRADLEY

You?

EUNICE

Well, Bernard?

BERNARD

What can I do?

EUNICE

We can't dictate in this. We have n't the right. But, dear — (*puts her hand on his arm*) — we'll be ready — to carry on.

NOEL

Don't you understand, Bern? It was they who came to me this morning.

BERNARD

The children?

NOEL

Yes. Oh, these parents who rave because their children don't love them — why don't those parents look into their own hearts?

HUGH

Dagmar, what are we going to do?

EUNICE (*going to them*)

If you could be married before you leave!

BERNARD (*brightens*)

Of course, they can!

EUNICE

If it's right with your mother and father?

[*Dagmar and Hugh look at each other. Then they embrace. Lois and Bradley hurry to them. Granny turns to them — even she is pleased at the idea of a wedding.*]

LOIS

What will you wear?

BRADLEY

Can I be best-man?

NOEL

It's "yes," Bern?

EUNICE (*going to Bernard and Noel*)

It is "yes," Noel.

BERNARD

But, Eunice, it's adventuring. You said yourself
we must be ready.

EUNICE

We will be! Don't you see?

BERNARD

Eunice!

EUNICE

We'll all be ready always.

CURTAIN

PS
3503
E1133
G6

32226

Date Due

NOV 13 1975			

COLLEGE OF MARIN LIBRARY



3 2555 00036425 2

The Library

COLLEGE of MARIN

Kentfield, California



PRINTED IN U.S.A.

N



